



PS3
PlayStation 3

PSP
PlayStation Portable

PS VITA
PlayStation Vita

PlayStation Network

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

ISSUE 83 JULY 2013
100% Australian Content

HOT FOR PS4!

CALL OF DUTY GHOSTS

Unmasked! Next-gen engine and dogs of war!

INTEL LEAK! ▶

SPLINTER CELL BLACKLIST

Hack into the coolest multiplayer ever!

SMOKIN' HOT! ▶

INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

Your next-gen leap into PS4's first must-play!

GORE-GEIOUS! ▶

THE EVIL WITHIN

The father of Resi's twisted new nightmare!

PS4
THE TOP 9 GAMES!

12-PAGE LOOK! ▶

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

Hands-on with a generation-definer!

REVVED-UP! ▶

GRAN TURISMO 6

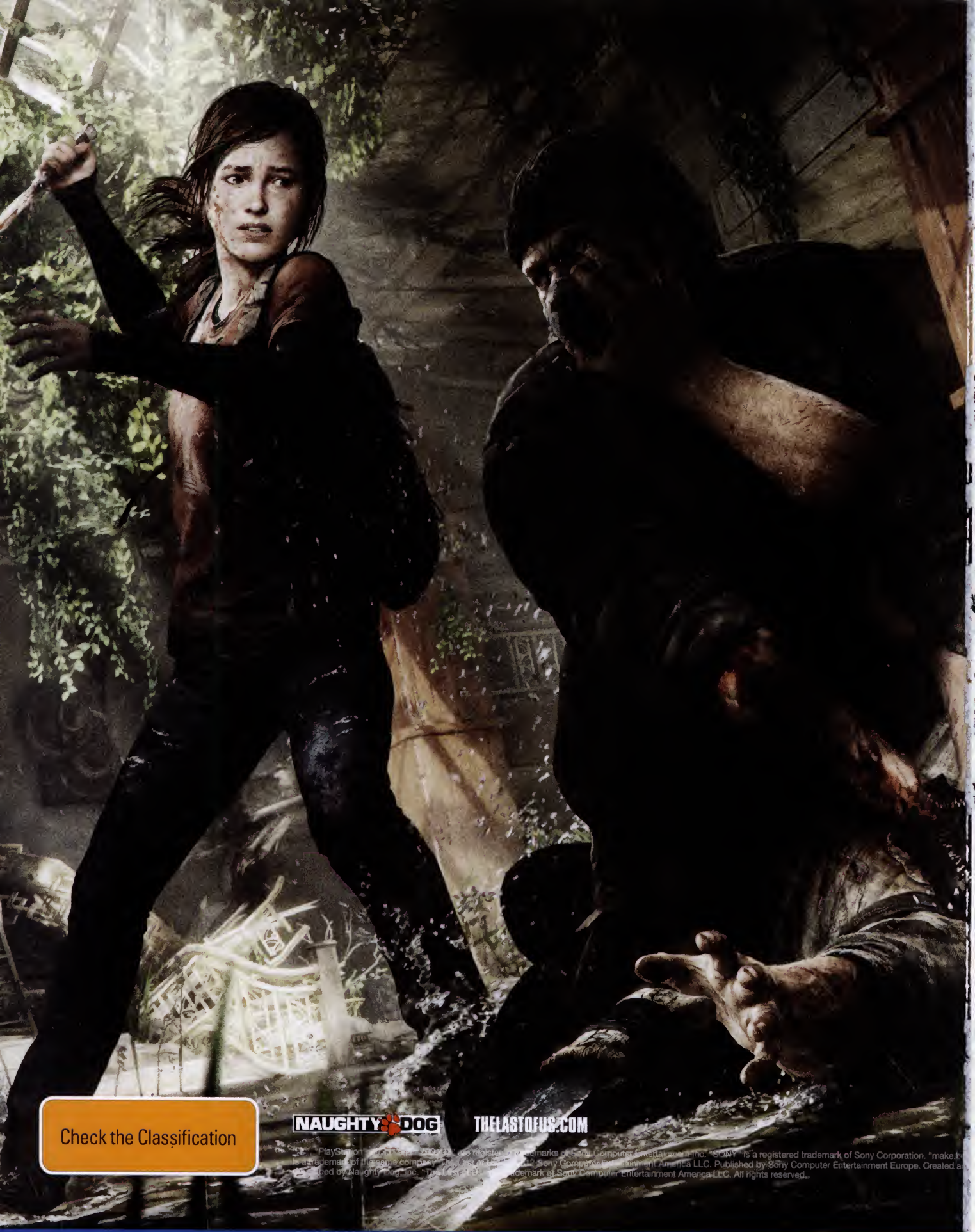
**Revamped engine!
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+

**WATCH_DOGS
WOLFENSTEIN:
THE NEW ORDER
BATMAN:
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DESTINY
LOST PLANET 3
AND MORE!**



BLOOD DRAGON DECONSTRUCTED: **EIGHTIES THROWBACK OR HOMOPHOBIC?**



Check the Classification

NAUGHTY DOG

THELASTOFUS.COM

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PS3
PlayStation 3

SURVIVE TOGETHER... OR DIE ALONE.

COULD YOU BE THE LAST OF US?
14/06/13



SONY
make.believe

COVER FEATURE

CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

We see dead people.

p60

REVIEWS

70 Resident Evil
Revelations

72 Remember Me

74 Grid 2

76 Muramasa Rebirth

77 Star Trek: The
Video Game

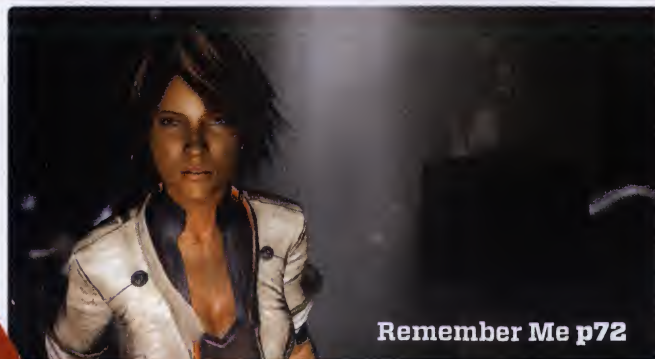
78 Soul Sacrifice

79 God Mode

79 Thomas Was Alone

80 Darkstalkers
Resurrection

80 Zombie Tycoon 2:
Brainhov's
Revenge





OPINION

J(?)RPG

Toby McCasker looks at how JRPGs are beating Western developers at their own game. **p28**



OPINION

A Gay Old Time

Is *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* homophobic propaganda? (Spoiler alert: no, it isn't.) **p26**



FEATURE

GTA V

Three protagonists, one world, endless possibilities

p46

PREVIEWS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 32 Splinter Cell Blacklist | 41 Destiny |
| 36 Infamous: Second Son | 42 DriveClub |
| 38 Lost Planet 3 | 43 Knack |
| 40 Killzone: Shadow Fall | 44 The Evil Within |
| | 45 Deadpool |
| | 45 Dragon's Crown |



ON THE COVER



- 32** Splinter Cell Blacklist
- 46** Grand Theft Auto V
- 58** Gran Turismo 6
- 60** Call of Duty: Ghosts

INTERVIEW



Castlevania: LoS 2's
Dave Cox p18

IN REALITY



REGULAR

- 22** Top 10
- 30** Inbox
- 82** Internet
- 84** Insight
- 86** Intermission
- 90** Release Schedule
- 92** Index
- 98** Next Month



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Meet the team



Adam Guetti

Staff Writer

This month's overseas mission: see *CoD: Ghosts*, and finally determine how many burgers is 'too many'.

Playing: *Remember Me*

Wanting: *Watch_Dogs*



Stephanie Goh

Art Director

The *OPS* team have been busy baking bread and the office is smelling mighty awesome. Pass the butter!

Playing: *Borderlands 2*

Wanting: *Watch_Dogs*



Dan Staines

Contributor

Hey, so, just in case you didn't already know: Bob's Burgers is pretty much the best show on TV. So much hilarity.

Playing: *Guacamelee!*

Wanting: *MGS V*



James Cottee

Contributor

Will Jeff Minter's *Tempest 2000* remake for Vita induce epileptic fits? Probably. And it will be glorious.

Playing: *Soul Sacrifice*

Wanting: *TxK*



James Ellis

Contributor

I've been on the hunt for an adult-sized Ninja Turtle outfit. Think about what you could keep in that shell.

Playing: All the PS3 games

Wanting: All the PS4 games



Nathan Lawrence

Contributor

Living life like a Shane Black film and counting down to Action Christmas in July. Oh yeahhhh!

Playing: *Remember Me*

Wanting: *Battlefield 4*



Dave Kozicki

Contributor

I'm absolutely hooked on tag-teaming *Defiance*: watching the show and hitting up the online shooter.

Playing: *Defiance*

Wanting: *Fuse*



Toby McCasker

Contributor

You know how you can pick people up in *Dragon's Dogma* and throw 'em off a cliff and no one says anything? Love it.

Playing: *Dragon's Dogma*

Wanting: *Cyberpunk 2077*



Angry Sackboy

Contributor

Playing *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*. Guffawing at the comedy, not over-analysing it and writing stupid things.

Playing: *BioShock Infinite*

Wanting: *GTA V*

Editorial



Whoever wrote the camera code for *Star Trek: The Videogame* owes me my innocence back and a clean pair of pants. This month a glitch caused my unprepared, coffee-sipping self to be ambushed by a smash cut look at the inner-horrors of Mr Spock's head.

The spit-take reflex was too powerful, Captain. I couldnae avoid it.

I'm not sure which was more horrific, the spreading of latte lava on my crotch,

or the faceless, tooth-filled eyeball-freak squashed hard up against the TV. I'm not intimately familiar with facial animation, so this was my first look at the hidden voodoo of eye and mouth rigging. All I knew was one minute Zachary Quinto was getting his Vulcan on, the next his face had exploded like a bad day in *Beetlejuice*.

Just quietly, I may be developing a phobia about complex virtual people. Because now I know – the more photo-realistic that avatar looks on the outside, the freakier the Freddy Kruger hosebeast lurking below the face texture.

I may not even play *Beyond: Two Souls* now. I like Ellen Page too much. When I look at her in her next movie I don't want to feel physically ill, like I do now with Quinto. If I bump her character model too close to the 'camera' in *Beyond* and see her turn into one of the face-melted Nazis from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, I simply will not be able to un-see that shit.

So take heed, dear reader. My soul has been haunted by what lies beneath. I pray that the old Gods and the new have mercy and spare your innocent eyes. Especially considering PS4 is nearly upon us. The next-gen freaks are coming...

Adam Mathew

Editor

Playing: *Metro: Last Light*

Wanting: *GTA V*

SPEAK WITH US!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins a prize! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:



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Question: what is the gift that keeps on giving the whole year round? Love? Wrong. A scratch-and-sniff calendar of celebrity crotches? No. Please stop abusing our rhetorical system.

The answer we were looking for is: an *OPS* subscription! Think about it, every issue – cheaper – delivered to your door via magic.

TURN TO PAGE 66

PlayStation.
Official Magazine - Australia

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Distributed by Network Services
Company in Australia and Netlink
in NZ.

Printed by Webstar.

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UBISOFT

This Month

- 10 Impulse Buys
Geek for cheap
- 12 Calendar
Upcoming stuff
- 14 Around the
World
Gaming/tech news
- 15 In Focus
Batman:
Arkham Origins
- 18 Interview
Dave Cox
- 22 Top Ten
Good Guys
Gone Bad
- 23 In Focus
Call of Juarez:
Gunslinger
- 24 In Reality
Parallel universes
- 25 Insane
Gaming satire
- 26 Opinion
Angry Sackboy
- 27 In Focus
Watch_Dogs
- 28 Opinion
Toby McCasker
- 29 In Focus
Wolfenstein: The
New Order

EA Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Gold

Disney splits *Star Wars*
publishing rights with
Electronic Arts





Publishing giant Electronic Arts has secured a deal with Disney to publish all future *Star Wars* related games, meaning no other company can make games based on the *Star Wars* universe.

At this point Disney will cater to the mobile, social, tablet and online game categories while EA will develop and publish for a 'core gaming audience' – likely referring to next-gen console and PC-related releases.

Where the deal starts to get really interesting though is on the development side of the agreement. EA Labels President Frank Gibeau says DICE (*Battlefield*), Visceral Games (*Dead Space*) and BioWare (*Mass Effect*) have already started work on new *Star Wars* titles. All of these titles will be powered by Frostbite 3, an engine that will debut with the release of *Battlefield 4*, and will be utilised in *Dragon Age III: Inquisition*, not to mention the next entry in the *Mass Effect* series. Unfortunately it could be a while before we start to see the first of these titles released as EA has confirmed they won't be publishing any new *Star Wars* games until at least April 1, 2014.

"The new experiences we create may borrow from films, but the games will be entirely original with all new stories and gameplay," adds Gibeau.

That said, what games can we expect? Based off its popularity, a sequel to LucasArts' *Star Wars Battlefront 2* (a shooter

revolving around the Rebels and the Empire eliminating each other on a battlefield) is looking like a solid contender. Interestingly, this 2005 game ran out of Steam keys for PC players when it was re-released in May. Elsewhere it dominated an EA poll asking fans what *Star Wars* game they would most like to play, and would fuse seamlessly with DICE's established development philosophy as *Battlefield* was always a "primary inspiration" for the *Battlefront* series according to LucasArts.

Could this also spell hope for *Star Wars 1313* and *Star Wars: First Assault*? These productions were suspended earlier this year after the acquisition of LucasArts by the Walt Disney Company in 2012 followed by its tragic closure as an internal developer on April 4, 2013.

Disney claims both games could be licensed out to a different publisher or developer but other sources claim the odds of that happening are "effectively zero". Still we would love to see development of *1313* tackled by Visceral considering their history with mature, atmospheric shooters (*Death Space* anyone?)

Whatever speculative hopes we have for the unannounced *Star Wars* games, two questions have to be asked. Will they require a constant internet connection and should we be worried about EA draining our pockets dry? Turning on your lightsaber – that's a micro-transaction. Changing the sabers colour – that's another micro-transaction. Modifying the engine in your customized podracer – ohhh, you better believe that's one hell of a micro-transaction.

— Martin Gladstone

In Short

A brief look at this month's news



► Sony CFO Masaru Kato has revealed that **the PS4 will not be sold at a loss when it launches later this year**. "Unlike PS3, we are not planning a major loss to be incurred with the launch of PS4," Kato told investors recently. "At the time we developed PS3, we made a lot of in-house investments to develop [Cell] ... But this time we already have existing technology to incorporate." Bottom line: a healthier bottom line right from the get go.

► And while we're on the topic of makin' that money etc., an "unprecedented" number of Sony executives – **including CEO Kaz Hirai** – have foregone their multi-million dollar bonuses in order to boost the company's bottom line. Hard times, indeed.

► **Major plot details for Naughty Dog's upcoming post-apocalyptic fungi-fest, *The Last of Us*, have been leaked online**. Having cracked the demo included with *God of War: Ascension*, hackers extracted a file containing the spoiler-laden names of every cut-scene in the game. So, if you don't want the game ruined for you by jerkbutt killjoys, be careful what you read on the internet.

► Pushing ahead with its laudable campaign to make PlayStation the indie platform of choice, **Sony has launched a new "indie game" category on the PlayStation Store**. "It's the first and best place to go for indie content," said Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's Director of Publisher and Developer Relations, Andrew Parsons.

► Judging by recently released ESRB ratings, **it looks as though Rockstar is planning to re-release *Grand Theft Auto I and II* on PSN**. The American ratings board gave the games a "Mature" and "Teen" rating respectively. Rockstar remains predictably tight-lipped on the matter, but smart money's on both games being released as part of PSN's PlayStation One classics range.

► According to publisher Sega, Gearbox Software's notoriously awful ***Aliens: Colonial Marines* has sold a whopping 1.31 million copies**. This despite the critical mauling it received (OPS score: 5/10) and the fact that it's the subject of a class action lawsuit for misleading advertising. Based on this, scientists theorise the next *Aliens* game could literally be made of cancer-causing plutonium and still sell 1 - 2 million copies.

► Outspoken dick-joke maestro **Goichi "Suda51" Suda has blamed publishers for the fact that his games don't sell very well**. "Grasshopper does have a very strong base; it's just that because we were so indie, publishers were always [treating us] differently," Suda said, blithely overlooking the possibility that his games – including *Shadows of the Damned* and *Lollipop Chainsaw* – don't sell well because they're actually a bit crap.

► Famed horror-film director **John Carpenter has expressed interest in making a movie based on *Dead Space***. "I would love to make [a *Dead Space* movie]," the director told *GameInformer*. "I'll tell you that right now. That one is ready-made."

► ***Saints Row 4* is going to have a "dubstep gun" that shoots electric wubs**. 10/10...?

► GEEK FOR CHEAP

Impulse buys

The Internet: home to trolls, a bevy of memes and adorable kittens. It's also a great place to find **awesome stuff you don't need, but have to buy**, so we've tracked down some of the best.

Mega Man Crochet Hat

Where:

www.etsy.com

How much: \$28

Finally, the fine arts of videogames and crochet are together in one glorious *Mega Man* hat. Not only will these puppies be made to order, but during these winter months they'll keep your head warmer than a hot water bottle filled with warm cocoa.



Zombie Demon Skull Fantasy Gauntlet - Hand Claw

Where: www.amazon.com How much: \$31.90

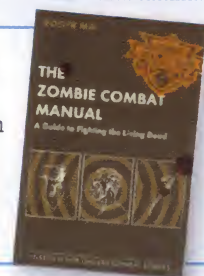
If there's one thing Wolverine and that Aussie douche from *Dead Island Riptide* proved, it's that hand claws are pretty freaking sweet. As if three 14.5-inch stainless steel blades weren't enough, you've also got a giant scary skull on the top. And we all know not to mess with no fool packing skulls.

The Zombie Combat Manual

Where: www.thinkgeek.com

How much: \$14.99

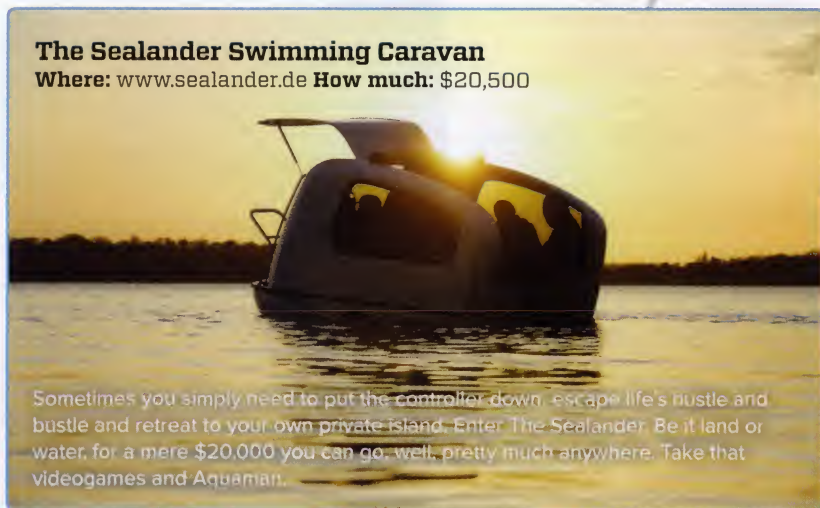
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Portal 2 Shower Curtain

Where: www.thinkgeek.com

How much: \$19.99

Only contains less than 1% mercury. Science!



OPS VAULT

JULY

2005

Holy-balls this was a big one! The PlayStation 3 was a 'Virtual Reality' as was its... boomerang controller? Alright so that thing was a mess, but the console made jaws drop with the likes of *Killzone 2* and *Heavenly Sword*. In 2005 *Tony Hawk* was actually relevant, so we told you all about *American Wasteland* and still had time to give the incredible *God of War* a 9 and compare *Motorcross Mania 3* with John Howard, because... if the shoe fits.



2007

It's the title that would change the face of videogames for years to come: *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 4*. We claimed Infinity Ward wanted to create "THE shooter to beat on PS3". Yep, nailed that one, guys. We also said *Fracture* was LucasArts' "next best thing." Yeah, not so much, hey? Stepping away from the world of pew-pew soldiers, we had the world's first review for *The Darkness*, and handed it a 9. Decent game, but that's maybe a touch too high.



2012

E3 is one of the biggest events in the videogame calendar and 2012 was no different. We unveiled a whopping 70 games for you to check out, from the great (*The Last of Us*), to the not so great (*Aliens: Colonial Marines*). Back in the office, though, *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* sniped itself a 9, while the Vita's *Resistance: Burning Skies* just scraped in a 5. We guess you could say it couldn't stand the... heat. Okay, okay we'll stop.



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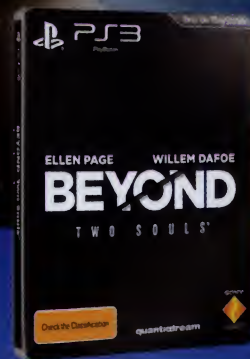
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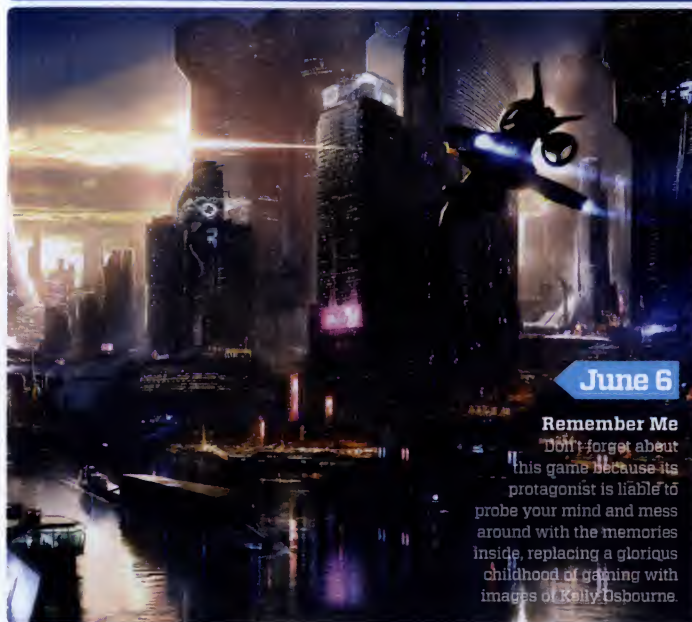
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THIS MONTH

Your 31-day planner of games and the good stuff!



June 6

Remember Me

Don't forget about this game because its protagonist is liable to probe your mind and mess around with the memories inside, replacing a glorious childhood of gaining with images of Kelly Osbourne.



June 6

Fast and the Furious 6

How this series hasn't run out of steam is anyone's guess but you can bet it'll be supercharged with nitrous-filled adrenaline and Vin Diesel's ridiculously oversized guns.



June 7

MotoGP 13

The only sport where it's cool to wear full body leather suits. Except here you don't have to worry about flesh grazing and corner indicating, unless you enjoy throwing yourself off the couch.



June 13

After Earth

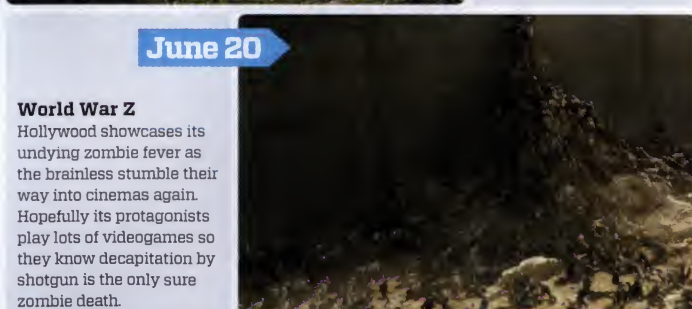
The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (Will Smith) and his son crash land on earth 1000 years after humans abandoned it. Pray this is M. Night Shyamalan ala *The Sixth Sense* and not *The Last Airbender*.



June 19

Jak and Daxter Trilogy

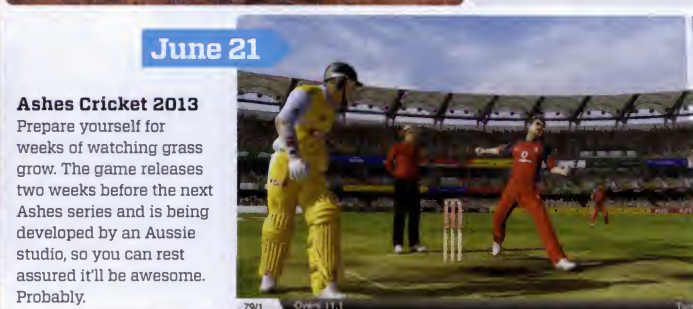
The wise cracking duo return all bundled up and served on the PS Vita. Includes *Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*, *Jak II*, *Jak 3*, HD graphics and a working morph gun... in-game.



June 20

World War Z

Hollywood showcases its undying zombie fever as the brainless stumble their way into cinemas again. Hopefully its protagonists play lots of videogames so they know decapitation by shotgun is the only sure zombie death.



June 21

Ashes Cricket 2013

Prepare yourself for weeks of watching grass grow. The game releases two weeks before the next Ashes series and is being developed by an Aussie studio, so you can rest assured it'll be awesome. Probably.



June 26

Deadpool

Don the red latex suit for the hero known as the 'Merc with a Mouth'. Keep in mind he likes all things bouncy, from inflatable jumping castles to more chest-based things.



June 27

Man of Steel

Yes it's another Superman movie but this could actually turn out really good. It's being produced by Christopher Nolan, directed by 300's Zack Snyder and looks as gritty as *The Dark Knight*.

Can't miss... The Last of Us JUNE 14

Naughty Dog are pretty damn good to PlayStation gamers, giving us the impeccable *Uncharted* series and now a likely contender for 2013's Game of the Year. Joel and Ellie are set to tell one of videogaming's most emotional stories to the backdrop of a quarantined city. If you couldn't already tell, we're excited... like 'Big Kev' excited.



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PS3®

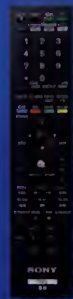
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Around the World

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in tech and gaming



SPACE GUN

GERMANY

In the event of a necromorph-infested space disaster Patrick Priebe has us covered with this *Dead Space* plasma cutter replica. It took the lab technician over 200 hours to complete and features three green lasers for aiming and two blue 1500 milliwatt lasers for burning. The cutter expands when fired and is able to rotate itself to a horizontal and vertical position. While the lasers are strong enough to leave scorch marks on wood it takes them about 10-15 seconds to do so, meaning you'd need to inflict a stasis effect on the creatures first. Damn.



HAMMER TIME

THE INTERNET

Caleb Kraft decided the standard police taser wasn't awesome enough so he created this 80,000-volt *Thor* hammer. Its electrifying power is generated by a tesla coil with enough charge to severely incapacitate any earth-dwelling being. The hammer itself is made out of foam so there won't be any smashing capable of sending evil-doers sky-high unfortunately. Still we can see Australia's police force chasing criminals and groups of trouble-makers down the street with their *Thor*-taser in both hands while their blue cape billows majestically in the wind.



DR MOVE

BERLIN, GERMANY

After the current generation of gaming we'd normally be against anything motion-controlled but in the medical field we're willing to forgive its history if it helps save a few poor souls. Created by Scopis Medical, this surgical navigation system utilises Leap Motion (a form of motion sensing technology) to use in the operating rooms of tomorrow. The motion controlled interface uses a mouse for point-and-clicking and a 3D gesture system for handling MRI and CT scan images. Maybe in 10 years time we'll all be operated on by a PlayStation Move.



TITANIC-ARMS

PENNSYLVANIA, USA

No, the Joker did not inject that chemical compound into the arms of kidnapped subjects but instead this invention, dubbed the TitanArm, is an exoskeleton that helps those with limited mobility and assists in rehabilitation. It was designed for a University of Pennsylvania engineering competition and is composed of an aluminium frame, battery motor and thumbstick controller for movement. The device also provides up to 23 kgs of lifting capacity. Now there's no need for that costly gym membership and tireless hours weight-lifting.



HANDLE THIS

UTAH, USA

Tactical Haptics, a company that specialises in feedback technologies, has created a motion controller that realistically simulates what a sword and gun feel like in action. It's built on a Razer Hydra controller and features four movable mechanisms that slide against your hand - allowing you to feel the recoil of a gun-shot, the weight of a swinging sword or the mass of a ball-and-chain. It's approximated the device will retail for US \$200 so you better start saving now. Finally we might have a motion controller that actually enhances the gameplay experience.

INTERNATIONAL TOP 5 CHARTS

EUROPE



- 1 **Injustice: Gods Among Us** Warner Bros.
- 2 **Bioshock Infinite** Take-Two Interactive
- 3 **Tomb Raider** Square Enix
- 4 **Call of Duty: Black Ops II** Activision
- 5 **FIFA 13** Electronic Arts

JAPAN



- 1 **Naruto Shippuden: Narutimate Storm 3** Namco Bandai Games
- 2 **One Piece: Kaizoku Musou 2** Namco Bandai Games
- 3 **Pro Yakyuu Spirits 2013** Konami Digital Entertainment
- 4 **Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX** Square Enix
- 5 **Assassin's Creed: Revelations** Ubisoft

USA



- 1 **Dead Island Riptide** Deep Silver
- 2 **Injustice: Gods Among Us** Warner Bros.
- 3 **Star Trek: The Video Game** Namco Bandai Games
- 4 **MLB 13: The Show** Sony
- 5 **Dragon's Dogma** Capcom

► INFOCUS

BATMAN: ARKHAM ORIGINS

The rumour-mill has gone into overdrive since we brought you up to speed on *Arkham Origins*. First cab off the rank is the presence of the Joker – seen in leaked promotional material – alongside Bane, Scarecrow and Killer Croc.

Next is a multiplayer mode that will allow you to play as a member of the Joker or Bane's gang while trying to take down Batman and Robin.

Finally, Kevin Conroy will reportedly not reprise his role as the caped crusader, in favour of a younger voice-actor. Just think of it this way – he's the hero that Gotham deserves, but not the one it needs right now.





Check the Classification

NAUGHTY DOG

THELASTOFUS.COM

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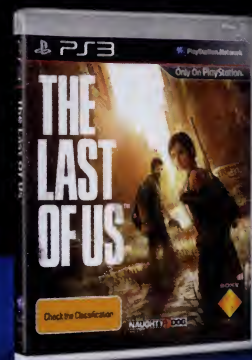


PS3
PlayStation 3



**KILL, OR
BE KILLED.
IF ONLY IT
WERE THAT
SIMPLE.**

COULD YOU BE THE LAST OF US?
14/06/13



SONY
make.believe

In their WORDS

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"[G]ame development - whether AAA, mid-size, or small - has always been the same big-size gamble ... You live game-to-game, because that's where all your income is coming from. If your latest game doesn't do well that's probably the end of it for you no matter whether you're big or small."

Dan Paladin of Behemoth Games (*Castle Crashers*, *Battleblock Theater*) on the perils of game development.



"I think it's time we stopped making excuses about why so many games are lame and admit ... that we CHOOSE to make and market them the way we do. We could be making different choices."

Industry guru and *Deus Ex* designer **Warren Spector** is sick of your bullshit, goddamn it.



"The way that ragdolls became the last generation thing ... we reckon next generation, everything's going to have to be destructible. It will be no longer acceptable to walk into a room where you can't punch a hole in the wall or break a table."

Andrew Bowell, international product manager for Havok, wants to break everything.



► INTERVIEW

Taking the Lord game in vain

Like vampires, we leech precious info out of **Dave Cox**, Producer of *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2*...

OPS: A good sequel takes the best criticism from its predecessor and uses that to help improve the final product. What was the best feedback you were able to use in *Lords of Shadow 2*?

DC: There became two very clear elements that people wanted to see in *CLOS2*: a free camera, and tighter platform elements. However, we are

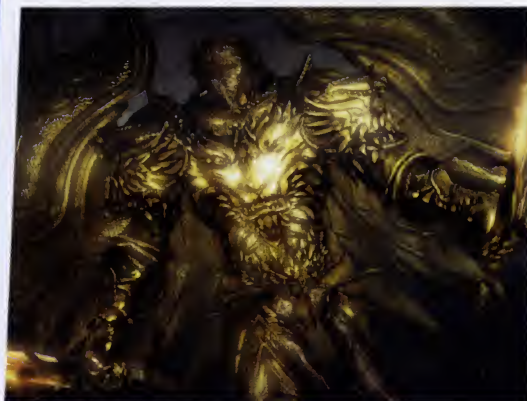
our harshest critics, and knew that there were loads of things we wanted to enhance and add.

The free camera was a given and it was always our intention to allow the player to control it in the new game, and we were also aware that some of the platform elements were slightly disappointing in the first *CLOS*. As such, both have been addressed in *CLOS2*, while we have also added a sense of scale and freedom that we felt would elevate the game to the next level.

The game world is huge and open to exploration, and things like the Titan fights have been totally reworked to give the player far more freedom. Titans now provide combat opportunities and freedom of movement.

To do all this, however, we needed a new engine, and *CLOS2* premieres the new Mercury Engine, which allows us to meet our goals and those of our fans, but also take the game far beyond what most people will expect.

OPS: Does it concern you that by talking about the story in *Lords of Shadow 2*, critics must first spoil the original's ending?



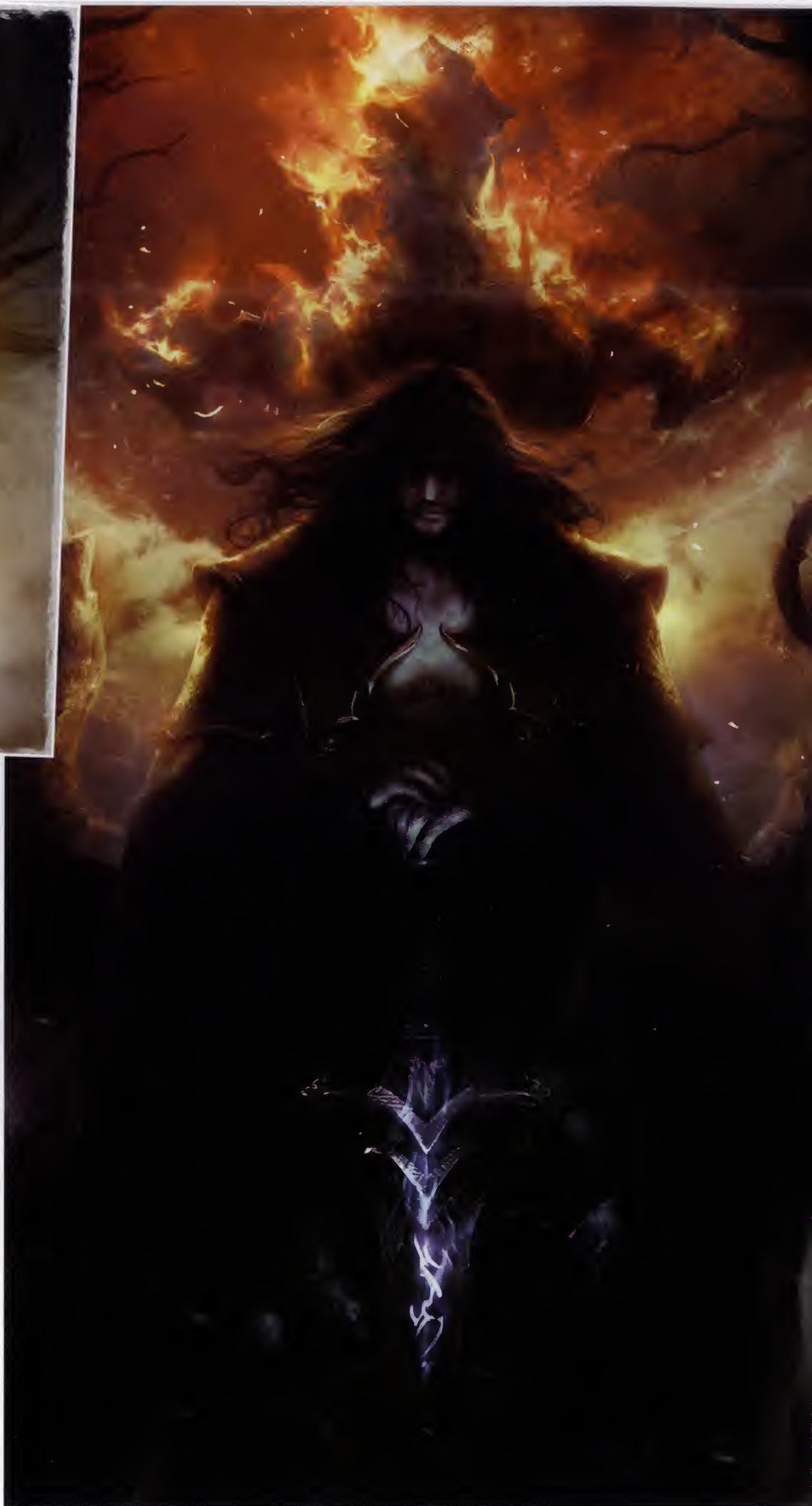


DC: Not really. I think enough time has passed since the first game, and a lot of people have been attracted to the original *CLOS* through word of mouth, as they hear about the stunning ending. The ending of the first game was just reward for all those that spent 20+ hours fighting through the game and showcased the intricate story-telling and bravery we felt were essential in taking the *Castlevania* series forward. *CLOS2* doesn't require the user to have played the first one, but those that have will feel a continuity and reward moving forward.

“ It's only natural people will want to see the sights **and drink it all in ”**

OPS: This game is set to be a lot 'less linear.' Do you think that linearity is a negative thing?

DC: Games need structure, and at the heart of *CLOS2* there are still objectives that have to be completed to move forward. However, we want players to explore the rich environment we have created and get to grips with Dracula's many abilities. In the first *CLOS* – and in many other games – once you progress, you cannot go back. In *CLOS2*, you can go back to a previously explored area to search for items or simply to explore,



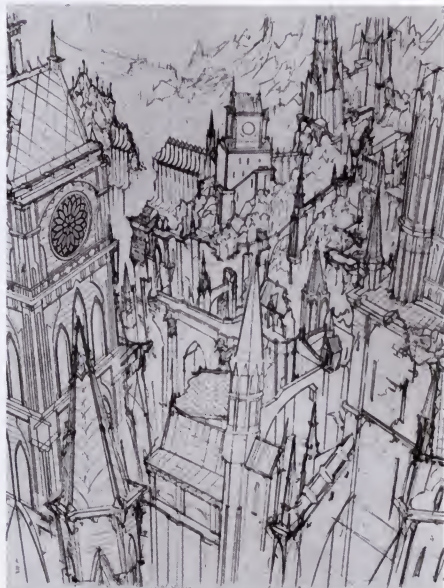
Mr Dracula dressed by [The Ostentatious Goth](#)

adding to the sense that this is a very real world you are exploring.

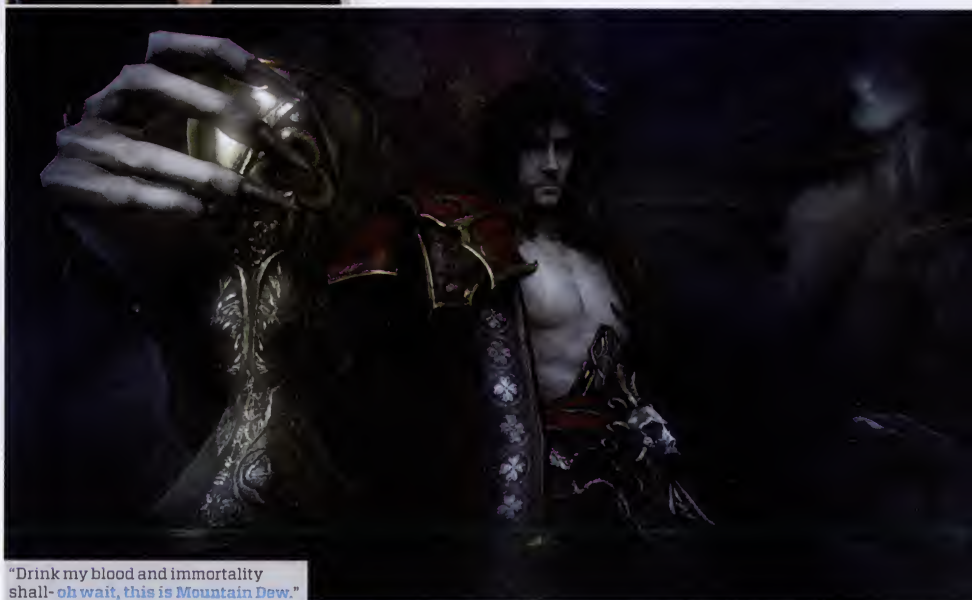
OPS: Is this an attempt to emphasise the focus on scale? Why was that one element chosen as a primary focus?

DC: Scale isn't the primary focus, as *CLOS2* will live and die by its story and action. But we want to set the game within a believable universe, and one that the player can immerse themselves in. It's no secret that the new game features a modern setting, but one that has Gothic links to the old *Castlevania* games. A huge amount of research and design has gone into making it a living, breathing city – so it is only natural that people will want to see the sights and drink it all in.

The first *CLOS* was a huge game, as was *Mirror of Fate*, so there is already a precedent for scale in the series. But a larger city aids the narrative and pace of the game, and makes the destruction that befalls the locations all the more felt as it is a place you have explored and got a feel for.



“The adversaries will present a series of challenges that mean the game can never descend into button-bashing”



OPS: Are there any plans to bring this game to PS4 and if so, does that mean you would have access to the beautiful FOX Engine? After all, we know you worked with Hideo Kojima during the development of the original *Lords of Shadow*.

DC: *CLOS2* is for 360 and PS3, and built using the home-grown Mercury Engine. We loved working with Mr Kojima on the first game and the exchange of ideas was invaluable, but we proved our merit with *CLOS* and have been given free reign this time around, and Mr Kojima is busy on other titles.

OPS: You've said that Mercury Steam don't want to become the *Castlevania*

studio. Is there any way you could be drawn back in for another shot?

DC: Nope. *CLOS2* concludes the three-act story seen in the first game and *Mirror of Fate*. If a story has nothing to add, then it is pointless. We aim to wrap up all loose ends and tell the story we want to tell. There will be no way back for the series after *CLOS2*, and we are already eyeing our next projects.

OPS: On a similar note, it's been made known that the team would like to become the next Naughty Dog. Why that studio in particular and what path do you think must be taken to achieve such a feat?

DC: I'm not sure we have ever said that, exactly! Nevertheless, Naughty Dog is a studio that has a lot to admire. It produces strong,

A golden opportunity for Drac to show off his electrifying swordplay



playable games with incredible narrative and set-pieces. We are very much walking our own path, but the central concepts of creating the best possible games that entertain and enthuse are universal, I think.

OPS: You've also mentioned that *Lords of Shadow 2* will feature 'freedom of play.' What exactly do you mean by that?

DC: It enjoys a good level of freedom as we want the player to play it with a range of choices. There is a set path in the game, but the new combat system and the way the user enhances Dracula's abilities is key to the way the game pans out. Players can choose how they enhance the main character, and how they attack. The adversaries will present a series of challenges that mean the game

can never descend into button-bashing to progress. Instead, different attacks are essential, and exploration vital. That, and the freedom of the city, of course!

OPS: Was the decision to remove Quick Time Events a conscious one to try and break away from the constant comparisons to *God of War* the original received?

DC: Let's face it, every game that comes out is pigeon-holed! It helps people understand which genre it sits within, but *CLOS* was never a *God of War* clone. It was a very different beast, that was trying very different things with its content. The reason the QTE elements have been toned down is that we have an engine that allows the Titan fights to be expanded

into far more interactive sequences. The first Siege Titan, for example, takes something like 20 minutes to dismember, and all the time it is moving and attacking the castle, while a series of guards and adversaries rush out to attack you. We loved the Titan fights in *CLOS*, but the new ones are far better in every respect.

OPS: The trailer for the new game showcases a mysterious swordsman with white hair. Many speculate that this could be former *Castlevania* protagonist Alucard. Is there chance that's true, or indeed any chance of having more than one playable character in the game?

DC: You play Dracula, and it's Dracula's story. Come on! As if we were ever going to give anything else away! ♫

Good guys gone bad

Welcome to **Spoilertown!** Population: you. Next stop, the worst of the best...



1

Superman *Injustice: Gods Among Us*

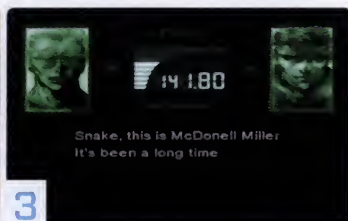
This isn't just a good guy gone bad, it's *the goodest guy gone baddest*. After being tricked into killing Lois, Supes uses his fist to de-heart the Joker, murders a few superheroes (one of them a kid) and becomes the fascist leader of the Earth. Superman? More like Superdickbag.



2

Lt. General Shepherd *Modern Warfare 2*

This one's for you Roach and Ghost "chest thump". Shepherd was an all-American turned all-asshole when he decided to side with Russian mass-murderer Makarov. A lot of good and somewhat-effective AI men died as a result, but we got even.



3

McDonnell Miller *Metal Gear Solid*

In the frigid wasteland of Shadow Moses Island, Master Miller kept our codec ear warm with his useless factoids about Alaska. He became much more interesting when it was revealed he was actually our nemesis wearing crap sunnies.



4

Dr. Angus Bumby *Alice: Madness Returns*

When Alice wants to forget about seeing her family die horribly in a house fire, Dr. Bumby is there to help her bury that stuff deep, deep down. Unfortunately, there's no altruism to the good doctor, as he is in fact the one responsible for the rape and murder of Alice's loved ones.



5

Lucy Kuo *Infamous 2*

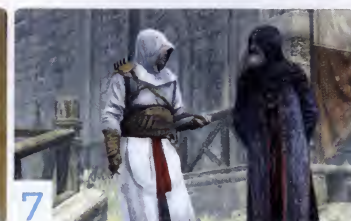
All the way through Cole's adventures in not-so-New-Orleans, Kuo is aligned to Cole's good side. She pulls a pretty massive moral u-turn towards the end however when she suggests you murder humanity to save conduits like herself. Now we see your true side, you ice-cold-bitch.



6

Atlas *BioShock*

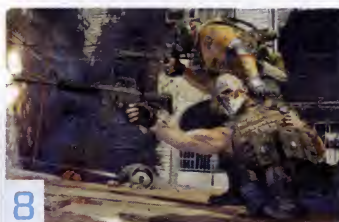
A likeable Irish underdog, champion of the poor, and recent widower thanks to Andrew Ryan, Atlas was our only friend in Rapture. He was also a sham; a mask of Frank Fontaine, master manipulator and all-round douchenozzle.



7

Al Mualim *Assassin's Creed*

Initially a father figure to Altair (a domineering one that demotes him to novice), Al Mualim is actually a big-bearded phoney. Turns out this Gandalf sack-of-crap was in bed with the Knights Templar the whole time. We murdered him good.



8

Rios / Salem *Army of Two: The 40th Day*

Rios and Salem are adhesive mates and bromance personified. However, in the final stages of their hetero fling they're given the option to murder each other to save Singapore, an option we gladly took.



9

Wheatley *Portal 2*

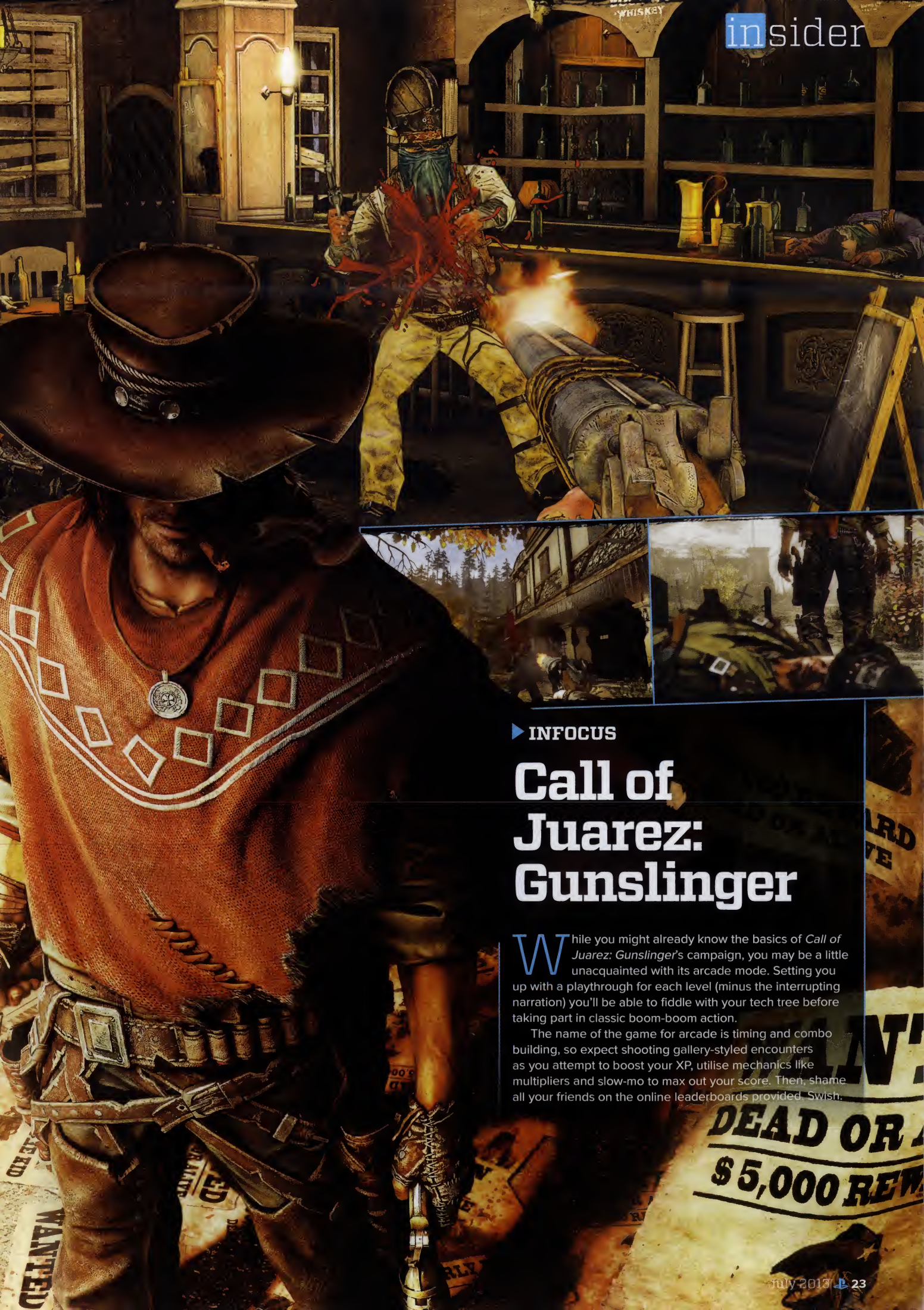
Let this be a lesson to you; true power can corrupt the most hilarious and stupid of friends... so do not let them use your barbecue. Wheatley started out as a loveable and moronic sphere but quickly switched to a tormentor with a chip on his non-shoulder.



10

Albert Wesker *Resident Evil*

It may surprise newer gamers to hear this, but there was a time – for ten minutes – when this guy wasn't a colossal prick. He was actually the upstanding and heroic Commanding Officer of the S.T.A.R.S. Alpha team. Then he became a double agent for Umbrella and arranged for his co-workers to be eaten by a giant snake. What a stand up guy.



► INFOCUS

Call of Juarez: Gunslinger

While you might already know the basics of *Call of Juarez: Gunslinger*'s campaign, you may be a little unacquainted with its arcade mode. Setting you up with a playthrough for each level (minus the interrupting narration) you'll be able to fiddle with your tech tree before taking part in classic boom-boom action.

The name of the game for arcade is timing and combo building, so expect shooting gallery-styled encounters as you attempt to boost your XP, utilise mechanics like multipliers and slow-mo to max out your score. Then, shame all your friends on the online leaderboards provided. *Swish.*

DEAD OR ALIVE
\$5,000 REWARD

► IN REALITY

Parallel Universes

As seen in: *BioShock Infinite*, *The Butterfly Effect*, your dreams

As many of you would know, *BioShock Infinite* is a game that opens itself up to many a scientific conundrum. Take the idea of Columbia itself, for instance. Sure, movies like *Up* make it seem like you need only attach a bunch of colourful balloons to go sky high for a memorable adventure, but as luck would have it, there isn't enough helium in the entire world to make a city the size of Columbia float. To use a more tangible example, you would need around the same volume of oil transported in all the oil tankers worldwide each year. So yeah, don't go expecting that one anytime soon.

The real meat and potatoes, however, comes in the form of the 'many worlds interpretation' – made central in *Infinite*'s final memorable moments and named by one Bryce Seligman DeWitt (coincidence, we think not). The theory implies that all possible alternative histories and futures are real and that each of them represent an actual "world" or "universe". At a more basic level, the 'many worlds interpretation' implies that the universe splits constantly into numerous universes that are slightly different from one another, and between which all communication is cut off. It all started in the early 20th century when the science world began discovering that massive amounts of evidence showed nature behaving strangely at very small scales – the law of motion breaking down at the atomic level.



'Call it' – your life depends on it

After all, until that point, everything indicated that matter was matter, meaning it should behave the same whether it's a planet, a tennis ball, or an atom.

An extreme example came in the discovery of "superpositions" of quantum states. For example, when we flip a coin we expect one of two results – a "heads" state or a "tails" state. But at a small enough scale, the coin would be in both states at the same time – the problem being we can not see this "quantum superposition" directly because whenever we look at it, it's either "heads" or "tails".

Before 'many-worlds', reality had always been viewed as a single unfolding history. The

theory, however, views reality as a many-branched tree, wherein every possible quantum outcome is realised. In ordinary human words, there might just be a very large, perhaps infinite (see what Irrational did there) number of universes, and everything that could have happened within our past, but never did, actually has occurred in the past of another universe (or universes).

As a theory, it's been gaining a lot of ground, moving from obscurity to mainstream media and helping to make *BioShock Infinite* the classic it will inevitably be regarded as in the years to come.

Still confused? Don't worry, in another world you totally get it.

► Adam Guetti

Slidin'

The '90s gave us another possible answer, all thanks to scientifically-sound *Sliders*. The sci-fi show followed a group of people, called "Sliders", as they travelled (slid) between different Earths in parallel universes via a wormhole. Vortexes could only be opened at random but preset intervals on each new world, monitored by a countdown on a portable timer. Failure to slide would strand the Sliders for 29.7 years. You just can't make this stuff up.

► NUMBER CRUNCHING

120 hours, 7 minutes

▲ The longest gaming marathon achieved by Chris Gloyd and Timothy Bell. Their game of choice: the *Resistance* series inside an EB Games store in Toronto, Canada.

\$135,000



▲ The amount of money Will "BigTymur" Johnson had to earn to become the highest-earning *Call of Duty* player on the planet.

Separated at Birth

NO. 53 *Deadly Premonition*'s Emily Wyatt and actress Naomi Watts

Aside from both being cute as a freaking button, one look at these two ladies and you'll swear they were sisters. The beautiful blonde locks, that heart warming smile and both played their role in similarly horrific events – Naomi in *The Ring* and Emily for just having to be a part of *Deadly Premonition*. Then there's that last name. If it were any closer there'd be lawyers readying their briefcases.

THRONE OF GAMES



ARTHRITIS IS COMING

► OPINION

BLOOD IN,
BLOOD OUT

Satire: [noun] The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices.

Every now and then I'm reminded why some games developers are hesitant to speak to the media. It's because, every now and then, I'm also reminded that some people are reactionary mousetraps who comb through life poised to spring shut at the slightest hint of offense.

This morning I read, with great frustration, an article on the internet that made me sigh so hard I nearly blew my monitor off the other side of the desk. I've decided against naming the site or the author because more hits is the last thing this desperate piece of clickbait needs. If you really want to know, you can Google it I guess. I won't stop you. I'm not your mother.

For logistical purposes here, let's just call the author Legolas. Why? Because they're both experts at drawing a long bow.

The article, a 1500 word epic filled with enough hot air to put a weather balloon into the mesosphere, is an agonisingly desperate attempt to construct an argument that Ubisoft's *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* is, in fact, homophobic. This is entirely thanks to the presence of a throwaway quip in the game's opening exposition that Legolas has taken great offense to.

Do you even remember it? I hope I'm not being too presumptuous but I would posit that there's a good chance you may not. It's little more than a single one-liner amongst *Blood Dragon*'s over-the-top, chest-beating, bicep-bulging introduction.

In the chopper, Rex's partner Spider is describing just how "goddamn near perfect" he really is, launching into a well-worn cliché.

"Men want to be me," he begins.

"And you want to be with men," interrupts an impatient Rex, derailing Spider's boast. "Yeah, I got it."

That's it. That's the extent of it. But it's more than enough to set

Legolas off, and what followed was one of the most tiresome pieces of waffle I've ever had the displeasure of absorbing.

"The first thing that immediately stood out to me when I initially previewed *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* wasn't the neon, it wasn't the hark back to the ridiculousness of the '80s, it wasn't even the blood dragons themselves," writes Legolas. "That's because I didn't get to see much of any of that before being hit with a gay, possibly homophobic joke."

Really? This is the first thing that stood out to you? I'm sorry, but if this is *literally* the first thing you noticed about *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*, you need to seriously reconsider the way you approach your entertainment. If you were truly able to ignore *everything* the developers had done in that opening sequence to the extent that the most memorable part of it for you was a joke you claim is

"A straight woman telling a gay man his dialogue is homophobic"

homophobic, you're playing games for all the wrong reasons.

To be honest, if the first thing that stands out to you when booting up *Blood Dragon* isn't, "Hey, this music is pretty neat" you should probably just stop playing it altogether. You're missing the point.

"The joke isn't funny, for one," Legolas continues. "It's not a satire of the '80s or its machismo."

Except that's exactly what it is. All Legolas is demonstrating here is a fundamental lack of understanding about the '80s movies and videogame culture *Blood Dragon* is lampooning. It IS a satire of the '80s AND its machismo. Machismo is a strong or exaggerated sense of masculine pride. *Blood Dragon* couldn't

be more in line with '80s machismo if the game itself squirted baby oil from your PS3 onto your bare pecs.

Legolas' complete failure to appreciate *Blood Dragon* exists entirely as a piss-take of '80s über-manliness and over-the-top posturing is stunning. We're talking about a satirical slice of an era where even Bill and Ted would chastise each other's sexuality for hugging after cheating death.

It's probably worth pointing out here that Legolas here is, in fact, a heterosexual woman (it's something she points out). What's interesting is that, even after *Blood Dragon*'s creative director informs her that the writer of the game is actually a gay man, Legolas remains incensed by this piece of dialogue and convinced of its homophobic nature. A straight woman telling a gay man his dialogue is homophobic – dialogue designed to reflect the time period upon which the game is based – seems a bit rich to me.

"It reinforces some archaic ideas of what a real man is," she writes.

So, at what point in this joke was it insinuated that because Spider wants to be with men that he was a lesser person? This is where Legolas' argument falls down. Either the joke is just a play on words and it's her alone creating the negative connotations, or

the joke's a genuine put-down between cyborg bros (written by a gay man) that can't be anything BUT a stab at '80s macho culture. It's one or the other, and in both scenarios Legolas is overreacting.

Or, you know, as a peer of mine pointed out, perhaps we should *all* be on a crusade to scrutinise, castigate and censor every single game until they're all unplayable, politically-correct pieces of shit. 🗑️



OPINION
Angry
Sackboy

Angry Sackboy is an ex-videogame journalist who can't stand white knights.

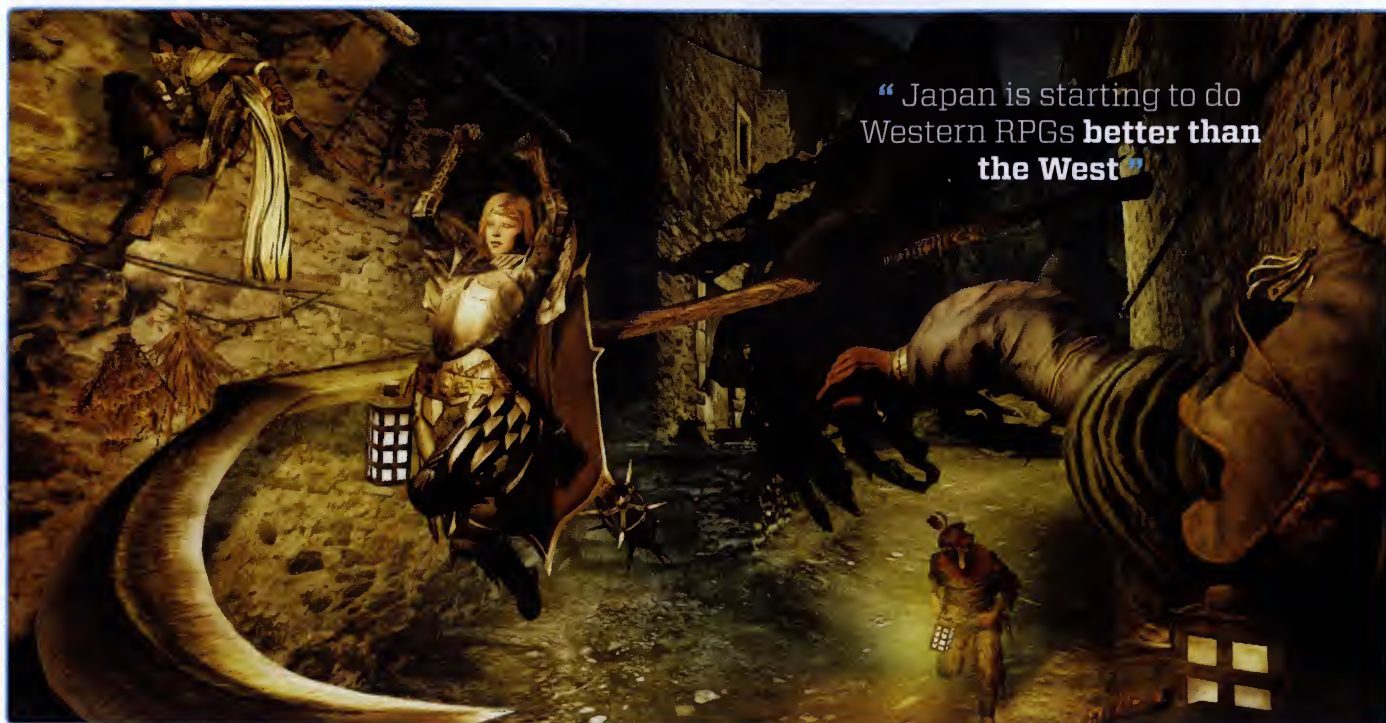
► INFOCUS

Watch_Dogs

When *Watch_Dogs* (love that superfluous underscore) debuted at last year's E3, we were excited, but also a little bit skeptical. While the concept – an open-world hacker sim set in a dystopic surveillance state – is indisputably solid, the heavily scripted launch trailer seemed a little too good to be true.

But now that we've seen the new six minute gameplay video, our reservations have all but vanished. In a word, this looks fan-freakin-tastic. Seamless stealth and action, hackable security cameras, cars, and *people*, pawn shops where you can sell guns and drugs, and a creepy dude sitting alone in his flat, talking earnestly to an inflatable sex doll... *Watch_Dogs* has it all and then some. Can. Not. Wait.





“Japan is starting to do Western RPGs **better than the West**”

► OPINION

JAPAN FANTASY

We know exactly what you're up to, Japan

Western fantasy tropes hit Japan via tabletop RPGs like *Dungeons & Dragons* in the '80s. The influence on anime and manga was almost immediate and persisted well into the '90s (remember *Slayers*?). Historically, Japan has had a knack not so much for creation, but refinement. They're given an idea, and then they make it better than anybody else. My Subaru has never broken down; my old Laser did the day I got it, on the way out of the lot. In terms of gaming, for a long time this was very true as well.

Videogames would not be what they've become without Square, Capcom and Sega – the list of the rising sun's influence being long and distinguished. Recent times have seen an incredible backlash: *Devil May Cry* is now made by Brits, *Silent Hill* is regularly traded for cigarettes by the Eastern Bloc, and “JRPG” is a dirtier abbreviation than it's ever been.

So if you're Japan, you do the very Japanese thing and take a uniquely Western construct and give it to the kind of perfection the West never dreamed of. The faded fascination with all that *Dungeons & Dragons* that came pouring over their mountains in the '80s has now... arisen, yielding stunning results for gaming — *Dark Souls* became the most unlikely smash-hit of 2011, and the following year *Dragon's Dogma* arguably revealed itself as one of the best RPGs of this generation.

You wouldn't even realise either of these games were of Japanese origin when you played them. They wholeheartedly embrace every nuance of Western fantasy, right down to the unusually English-free Medieval speak as voiced by people who are probably knights. Tolkien's estate, too, must be getting a ton of royalty checks from Japan and wondering just what is going on over there.

Dragon's Dogma especially speaks volumes of Japan's insular development philosophy. It's an absolute scoundrel of its peers' ideas. There is *Skyrim*'s open world, unheralded difficulty spikes ala *Dark Souls*, the free class-switching of *Kingdoms of Amalur*, a lite crafting system like *The Witcher*, lore straight from *Dragon Age*'s

tome, and frenetic combat that wouldn't be too out of place in *Devil May Cry*. *Dragon's Dogma* is a gigantic cat burglar of all that has come before it, but in Japan's wholesale assimilation and betterment of what's happening, there is always some form of improvement. It's not copy 'n paste so much as copy 'n baste for added flavour.

The Pawn system is ingenious, managing to embrace this gen's obsession with online in such a way that it leap-frogs the typical tacked-on solutions of *God of War: Ascension* in favour of something integrated and relatively unobtrusive. Every time you rest at an inn, your Pawn might have returned from adventuring with some other player, bringing with him or her items, rift crystals, and feedback on their effectiveness and dress sense. A lot of boys play *Dragon's Dogma*, evidently. Ensure your Pawn is a hot mage (everyone always needs a mage) chick (and chicks) in tiny underpants and you're guaranteed to wake up to a bevy of gifts and five-star ratings.

Instead of “fixing” the JRPGs they did best, Japan seem to be whittling them back down to their fundamentals. If you've played recent efforts like *Mugen Souls* or any of the *Hyperdimension* or *Atelier* games, you'll notice a pattern of vintage grind and textbox banter returning to those JRPGs chosen for localisation as opposed to the wilder experiments of *Nier* and *Resonance of Fate*. Now what we have is a developing situation where Japan is starting to do Western RPGs better than the West.

A few years ago, the internet was definitely not talking about *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* and *Dragon Age III: Inquisition* having their work cut out for them because of a new challenger from Japan — *Dark Souls II*. In a funny and cyclical way, it may well be that Japanese game development gets back up on its throne by virtue of half-way ripping off those who have thrived because of it, only to begin its reign of influence over them once more. In short, you can expect to see ideas similar to the Pawn system bloom all over. 🐾



OPINION Toby McCasker

Toby McCasker's Pawn is incredibly popular and also designed in the likeness of his girlfriend. He's not sure which way to feel about that.

► INFOCUS

Wolfenstein: The New Order

We pity the fool who doesn't love some B.I. action, as in William 'BJ' Blazkowicz – gaming's first FPS hero and the *Wolfenstein* series' stalwart Nazi killer. Sucks to say it but BJ's last outing in 2009 was a bit limp due to its Hitler-less anticlimax. However this sequel may head in exciting new directions, and diehard fans should definitely get psyched for what's about to go down.



Speak to us!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins something awesome, too! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:



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That codpiece is almost as bad-ass as Guetti's one this month – but would not pay for

COMPLETE AND UTTER DEFIANCE

To whom it may concern,

I recently purchased *Defiance* under the perceived promise of an MMO future shooter that I could enjoy with my friends and I found that, in the right company, it was in fact rather enjoyable.

Thrilled was I then to discover it had micro-transactions as well. I love MTs; that sinister feeling of elitism that comes from having a decorative item that a poorer or smarter person doesn't have in their items menu.

So I happily shelled out for the middle \$35 points pack and went shopping. I planned to get a few zany hats, some funky costumes and maybe a pimp wagon. I salivated at the thought of the hundreds of potential items... There are 9 costumes.

Oh. That's okay, it's still a new game – 880 points for an outfit? Uh, wait a second... 880 points... THAT'S MORE THAN TWELVE DOLLARS! WHAT IN THE NAME OF FLYING FAECES IS THIS TRAVESTY?

\$12 for half of a full outfit? No freakin' way. If I'm gonna spend \$12 on a costume I expect Princess Leia's metal bikini with a matching lesbian ninja strip club to wear it in. The key word in micro-transaction, for me anyway, is "micro". In a daze I spent my measly \$35, tried on my 2 outfits, said "meh"

and went to play *Borderlands 2* instead.

My question to you is this: How far are we, as gamers, as consumers, willing to be pushed? How much utter bullshit will we tolerate before we rebel? How much would it take to go Stephen King's *Misery* on their asses, kidnap game designers, hobble them and force them to make a game we actually want?

Maybe that's a bit much...

But we must realise that evil will persist while good men do nothing. Charging \$12 for an outfit is not just robbery, it's evil.

On a lighter note, I love the mag, I buy it religiously every month and spend hours on the dunny reading and re-reading it. I'm super pumped for PS4, my local is taking pre-orders for it at \$899. General opinion on the net is \$500 max. What do you guys think?

Owen Collins, via email

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Great letter. You lost us for a second when you voiced your love of micro-transactions, but then you brought us right back again with the random Stephen King reference. We should probably point out that mutilating shoddy developers isn't an activity we can sanction. Officially.

Not sure what the solution to your problem is, other than that tired old cliché: 'vote with your wallets'. We keep saying it. But people keep buying crap.

PS4 price-point? If we were betting men, we'd say \$599. Don't quote us.

REVIEWER REVIEW

Hi guys,

Long time reader and second time writer. I just wanted to add to Adam Mathew's Editorial from Issue 82, June 2013 in that I absolutely concur.

Although I rarely have a need to seek videogame reviews, on the internet or in other magazines, due to the sterling job you guys do, it comes to no surprise that certain attention seeking squeezers attempt to stand out in the crowd and receive their five minutes of fame by bagging a perfectly good or excellent game.

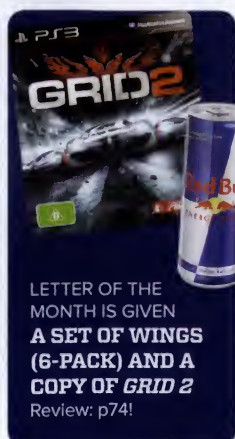
Although I read your magazine from front to back, I would be happy to skip over the 'Metacretin' section where some wannabe reviewer unjustly whinges about a game in order to get in the spotlight for being dissimilar to the impartial reviewer.

Being a gamer for approximately 30 years, I in fact find most games (including *Bioshock Infinite*) that their 'Normal' mode is quite balanced. This difficulty level is what I tend to commence a game on prior to playing again on 'Hard' mode and yet again on 'Toughened/God/Veteran/etc' mode.

Normal mode tends to be a good starting point as it allows me to enjoy the story without being overwhelmed by the enemy and prematurely develop controller rage, commence developing strategies for future playthroughs and to get a good leg up with trophy achievement. Anyway if gamers have an idea of what genre game they're after, follow your review (score 7 and above), ideally play a demo if available and ignore the reviewers with an agenda, you can't go wrong.

Michael Clark, via email

First of all, thanks, Adam often wonders if people agree with his rants. Secondly, we can see how Metacretin



LETTER OF THE MONTH IS GIVEN A SET OF WINGS (6-PACK) AND A COPY OF GRID 2
Review: p74!



Multiplayer: a social place where you can shoot people who pay \$12 to look like a plant



is a love it/hate it section. It's a monthly car crash that some wish to avoid, yet others cannot turn away from.

We generally review everything on Normal, then go back for a quick look on Hard (time permitting). We also match reviewers to their fave genres. But are also mindful of not linking games with over-enthusiastic fanboys. Clint McCreadie, for example, is not allowed to touch any Western game.

SOLO SHMOLO

Hey OPS,

I'd like to express my disappointment in DICE's choice to include another single player campaign in *Battlefield 4*. In my mind *Battlefield*, way back to 1942 on the PC was always about the multiplayer vehicular combat.

If I wanted to see some scripted action showpieces I'd buy *Call of Duty*. I just wish they'd drop the forgettable single-player and focus on where it really matters.

Sam Bussing, via email

Dude, we're hearing you. And honestly – tree of trust time – last month's cover story *should* have been overflowing with info about multiplayer. Sadly, that's exactly what DICE did *not* want to talk about. That was just the punch we (and the rest of the world) had to roll with.

RATINGS BLUES

I love the mag and I just have a few questions.

I'm nine and I'm only allowed to play G, PG and M games. I want to play games like *Black Ops II*, *Battlefield 3*, *Uncharted 3* and *Tomb Raider* but I'm not allowed.

Since I'm getting a PS4 can you tell me some good Shooters and action games that are Rated PG or M on the PS3 and PS4? Games like *Injustice: Gods Among Us* should be rated M not MA15+. It's just superheroes fighting with a bit of blood.

Next, you guys are always playing different games. Do you even get a chance to finish a game? Don't you feel like finishing a game and then moving on to the next one. I would hate to have to play a bit of a game and then reveal

it and play a bit of another one and review it.

I sort of know how it feels because I have a blog and I review videogames on it. It is called 'Video Game Central'. You can find it at videogamecentre.blogspot.com

But I get to finish the whole game before I review it. Over and out.

Aiden Prioste, via email

PG-rated shooters worth playing?

Man, that's going to be a short list that stretches the boundaries of the term.

But here goes:

Portal 2 (told you so).

An M-rated list of decent shooters isn't that much better. *Battlefield Bad Company*, *Transformers Fall of Cybertron* and *M.A.G.* (warning: online experience will turn into a cluster strike of f-bombs).

Injustice was actually pretty dark.

See this month's Top 10 page – or don't, if you hate spoilers.

Also, we finish our games – it's a requirement. We do often know what we're going to score something before the halfway point hits. Which is why slogging through a 5/10 (or lower) can feel like cruel and unusual punishment.

It's great to see some new blood taking to video games reviewing. Stick with it and best of luck.

ANTI-COD

Hey OPS,

I hate *CoD* multiplayer. I hate the way it is. I get the appeal, but I can never get past the flawed logic of Mission Control. Whoever's deciding the tactics has no idea. Instead of sending three soldiers to the enemy's 1 to capture and hold whatever map they're fighting over, they match the enemy's numbers and almost exclusively send snipers...

Even if the map is a yacht.

Hopefully the *BF4* servers will work better than the *BF3* ones. It would be nice to be able to complete a match without suddenly losing connection with the server, and rendering all your hard won points moot.

Che Patterson, via Facebook

What the hell? *BF3* servers are still doing that? You think they would have ironed that out completely by now. We hit eject on that after the disconnects started gyping us out of unlocks and XP.

Feeling your pain on the sniper situation. "Our target area is an elevator, so I want six snipers to bust in there and assault," said no Commander, ever.

Cuttings

► Taylor made

Oh, *Persona 4 Arena*, why must you tease me so? Sure, it's already been something like a year since the game has been released everywhere else on Earth...

Matt Williams,
via Facebook

It's a bit crap, no? Every single Japanese player we encounter online has got a year under their belt. EXACTLY what we need.

► You Pay Now

I think we get screwed with prices in general in Australia.

Andrew Maddock,
via Facebook

Seems to be a running, unfunny joke with this country, huh?

► Watermarked

Apart from that big fat IGN Logo in the side corner, this looks amazing.

Callum Turnbull,
via Facebook

Watermarked videos and screens, the bane of our existence.

► Nostradamus?

I really hope the PS4 is delayed in Australia by, like, six months or so. That would be so awesome.

Nobody at all,
via Facebook

Get off our Facebook wall, you filthy, jinxing degenerate.

Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia on facebook.

▼ Storefront

What deliciousness have you bought lately?



Christopher Reidy
Saints Row: The Third
"Awesome crazy game! love it!"



Mike Burns
Hitman: Absolution
"First one I've played since number 2"



Pappington McDeathslash
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon
"Blood Dragon all day err day!"



Paul Bilsborow
Tekken Tag Tournament 2
"Buying the last few cars in GT5, too"

▼ Caption This

You put the words to the screen. Simple.



"Peter Griffin went to the extremes in making sure everyone had heard the word about the bird"

Al Peck's name is prophetic, his caption something to crow about.

This Month

- 32** Splinter Cell Blacklist
- 36** Infamous: Second Son
- 38** Lost Planet 3
- 40** Killzone: Shadow Fall
- 41** Destiny
- 42** DriveClub
- 43** Knack
- 44** The Evil Within
- 45** Dragon's Crown
- 45** Deadpool



Splinter Cell Blacklist

A game of 'I spy' with no merc-y

Splinter Cell's asymmetrical multiplayer, Spies vs. Mercs, will settle some great gaming rivalries. Sneaky bastards vs. gung ho juggernauts. Parenthood-jeopardising suits and knives vs. bulky armour and penis-compensating guns. Stupid glow-in-the-dark NV goggles vs. incandescent infra-red visors of equal stupidity.

We doubt anybody will actually win that last showdown. Both sides will suffer horrific casualties and leave a corpse pile prettier than a Christmas tree.

The *Splinter Cell* diehards among you will recognise Spies vs. Mercs as an update of the criminally underplayed multiplayer mode from 2004's *Pandora Tomorrow* and 2005's *Chaos Theory*. The six of you who owned a PS2

Network Adaptor probably have really fond memories of it. The rest of us only experienced it in 2006's *Double Agent* on PS3. Since then Spies vs. Mercs has been absent from the franchise, most notably in *Splinter Cell Conviction*, though that never concerned us as that game didn't see PS3 release. Thanks a bunch by the way, Ubisoft.

Blacklist's take on this multiplayer mode follows the original template pretty closely: a group of lithe but unarmoured stealth exponents try to hack computers using nothing but their wits and a cache of fancy gadgets. Standing in their way is an angry kevlar wall of hired goons with high-capacity life-adjusters. The twist: the spider-like Spies play in third-person and flit through the shadows like ninjas, the Mercs are locked into first-person and have flashlights.

A couple of things have changed here. Originally the spies were basically dead-men-stalking if they were spotted by a merc, and could only kill their enemies from behind. This time they're much more predators than ghosts thanks to Sam's new killing-on-the-run mechanic. Secondly, Ubisoft is offering two different mode flavours – deliciously tense two-vs-two affairs, or a four-vs-four clusterbang of utter chaos.

The former is effectively a 'classic' mode that is as barebones as what *Pandora Tomorrow* was. You have no modern day creature comforts, only the skilful use of light and shadow will earn you victory. Alternatively, the eight-player variant is much more reliant on the use of class and customisations.





"Cover me, Phil, while I find the **Any Key**" *Sigh*



"Moosh your sworn-enemy's free Wi-Fi and hide yourself somewhere nearby"

If you're a hack-happy spy, the process of tapping into your three terminal targets is a bit more streamlined this time around. Now you'll need to walk up to a physical box and spend a few seconds initiating the download, but once it's going, you can mooch your sworn-enemy's free Wi-Fi and hide yourself somewhere nearby until the process completes. If you lose at these hide-and-seek antics (typically by a bullet to the face), a timer appears that will allow a fellow spy to continue your download and take all the credit for a successful capture. What can we tell you? There's no 'I' in team, but there's three in 'opportunistic dickbag'.

On the topic of changes, *Blacklist* introduces six new character classes – three per side – each of which come with a unique technique that can greatly aid your team's chances.

The Spies get Saboteurs who can destroy enemy counter-measures; Predators that have limited cloaking; and Scouts with the ability to reveal enemy locations. Meanwhile, the Mercs have Peacemakers who can regen health

quicker and laugh off damage; Hunters that may deploy heat-seeking UAVs; and Disruptors can jam enemy goggles (with strawberry fruit preserve) [citation needed]. So far as we can tell, each specialist has an exact counter to their skills on the opposing team, a balance we hope won't be ruined by XP-grinding and ludicrously overpowered unlockable perks.

Ubisoft is also layering in the ability to build your own custom loadouts. Mixing and matching your class ability with guns, gadgets, and equipment will offer you useful bonuses like increased ammo reserves and speedier movement.

Also, pucker-up purists, because the Spies (who traditionally used non-lethal gadgetry) now get access to projectile

weapons that murder from afar. That will sound like sacrilege until you realise how hard Merc armour

is. Trying to shoot a Merc dead is like trying to king-hit somebody packing a riot shield – totally do-able, but you're going to need a bunch of misfits, concentrated abuse, and a plan.

Even still, we have some concerns that the balance of power has shifted too much here. Back in *Pandora Tomorrow*,



The Pitch

Sweet, stealthy multi

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: AUGUST 22

DISTRIBUTOR:

UBISOFT

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT

MONTREAL

PLAYERS: 1-8

Chaos Theory and *Double Agent*, Spies were the mice in the cathouse; after Ubisoft's tweaks they're looking closer to small dogs. The one shining beacon of hope is that before a winner is decided for any match, all of the players in the lobby must switcheroo and have a stint on the other side of the fence. It'll be hard to whinge about the spies being all-powerful if you can't demonstrate your ability to win with them.

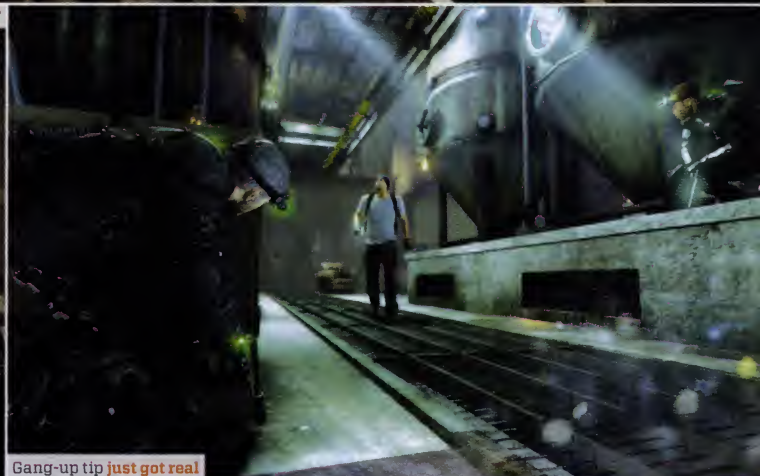
If adversarial operations aren't your black bag, this new *Splinter Cell* includes a cadre of co-op missions to



That's going to leave a bullet hole. No wait, maybe it won't...



"HQ, is it a bad time to tell you I'm blind in my right eye"



Gang-up tip just got real



Sam's been hanging to kill this guy

Worst case of pink-eye we've ever seen

Got gear?

Expect 540 possible variations per class, including torso-armour mods with active abilities, 12 passive abilities, and 3 vision modes.

“Contrived reasons for you and your buddy to use each other **like stupid-sexy step ladders**”

help fill your bromance quota. The team at Ubisoft Montreal are to be commended for how well they've integrated this two-player mode into the framework of the existing single-player campaign. As you spend your mid-mission downtime in the Paladin – Sam's constantly airborne base of operations – you can engage in crew conversations that trigger double-man adventures. The hetero participants: Sam Fisher and Isaac Briggs, a CIA agent being trained into becoming a key Fourth Echelon bad-ass.

In terms of gameplay, co-op missions feel much like Sam's solo 'spandexperience', where stealth and action awkwardly collide and try to coexist. It's clear that Ubisoft has geared the level designs towards co-op as they're much more open, are jam-packed full of hostiles, and sport multiple points of ingress to your target. The latter, obviously, will require contrived reasons for you and your co-op buddy to use each other like stupid-sexy step ladders.

If you're not into teamwork you can quite organically split up and snap necks in completely different areas of the map, then unify once more to unleash a multi-pronged attack on a group of guards. If you've both melee killed a bunch of guards

during your separate adventures, when you're combining your forces for the aforementioned assault you'll have earned access to the Mark and Execute mechanic. Watching two people insta-murder multiple targets at the touch of a button never, ever gets old.

Personally, we highly recommend using stealth over force as it A: provides the most endorphins when your plan goes off without a hitch, and B: stops *Blacklist* from playing like every other third-person cover shooter out there. Disappointingly, there are certain sections of a co-op level where the designers basically give you no other option other than to flick onto full-auto, gather your nuts in a sack, and dive in.

If your compatriot soaks up too much lead they can be brought back from the brink if you make tracks over to them. This 'blunder through and get an extra chance' mechanic seems a little out of sync with what should be a much more deliberative game. Sounds a little too *Army of Two* for our liking.

Those of you who can resist being a bullet magnet can rely on less pissweak mechanics to make a firefight more tactically rewarding. Our personal favourite is proper use of the returning 'Last Known

Location' mechanic, and some good old fashioned pincer movements. The trick is to get both operatives spotted behind some cover, then while one of you is the designated crap-stirrer, the other skirts around into the shadows and sets up some lethal crossfire.

If Ubisoft can emphasise and expand upon these sorts of gameplay moments, *Blacklist* may just have the ability to rise above its competitors. It's been a while since the asymmetrical multiplayer concept has delivered longevous fun and felt like a worthy additive to a complete game package – *Aliens: Colonial Marines* and *Dead Space 2* being the most memorable misfires.

We've got a good feeling about this, however, and will continue to stalk Ubisoft from the shadows for more info. Restraining order be damned. **Adam Mathew**

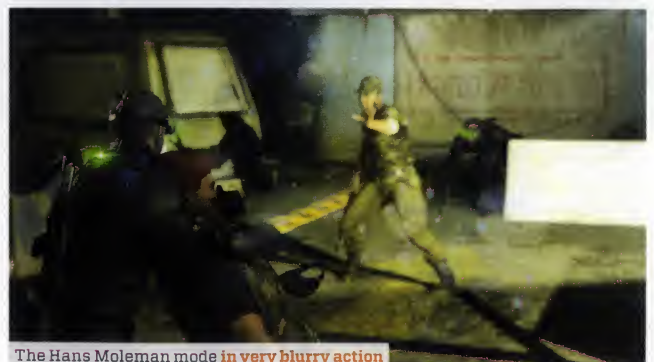
They Say

"We have the classic mode, it's close to what it was and it's really intimate, basic yet strategic, and you use the light and shadow, very core to the pillars of *Splinter Cell*."

We Say

The more stealth you mention to us, the happier we are being.

Verdict



The Hans Moleman mode in very blurry action

When a problem comes along **you must whip it**Step on a crack. **Break your mama's back**Shooting hadouken blanks. **A medical thing, nothing to be ashamed of**

Infamous: Second Son

Smoking kills

The Pitch

New dude with a 'tude, smoking fools in an actual real-life city

Info

FORMAT: PS4

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: TBA

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SUCKER

PUNCH

PLAYERS: 1

Firebrand. If there's one word that best describes and makes a pun about the hero of *Infamous: Second Son*, that'd be it. Firstly, because he's the portrait of anti-establishment, and secondly, he'll (eventually) make X-Men's Pyro look like an underpowered pansy.

Delsin Rowe lives in a universe where an altruistic Cole McGrath has been dead for seven years (a plot decision Sucker Punch made after doing a save data survey on *Infamous 2*'s penultimate morality choice). Since New Marais the U.S. Government has gone Big Brother crazy, creating an anti-conduit watchdog called the Department of Unified Protection (DUP).

On a good day Delsin's hometown of Seattle is basically one big pain in the arse airport security area, where

everybody is scanned for superpowers.

We join our hero on a particularly bad day, when a jailbreaking bunch of Conduits turns the city into an open-world Gitmo on Defcon 1 alert.

Fortunately, the Native American Delsin has the skills to take care of himself and to smoke his assailants. Literally. Calling upon the awesome power of a thousand chain-smoking grandmas in an RSL, our hero can trash the security systems in DUP outposts with hadouken-style blasts.

When the DUP military personnel mobilise because of your renovations, you can then smoke-dash (read: Nightcrawler teleport) short distances to make an escape. Probably the best feature of this power: Delsin can dash into a street-level air duct and emerge seconds later from the AC unit on the

roof of that building. Parkour climbing is sooo last-gen.

If you do choose to take the fight into a DUP compound, you can expect a few surprises. For some inexplicable reason the DUP have minigun-toting heavies who have a supernatural resistance to some of Delsin's powers – something that hints at government employed, or perhaps even indoctrinated, Conduits.

Whatever the case, the smaller soldiers can be crowd-controlled with a debilitating smoke cloud, and Delsin's power reserves can be replenished by tapping into the DUP's tear gas canisters. That process is achieved by holding two thumbs on the DualShock 4's touchpad, and smoke essence may be leached from chimneys and burning vehicles, too.

Hey I can see my house from here. **Aaand it's on fire**

"Go into this expecting more touchpad flicking and less 'claw-hand' movements on the shoulder buttons"



Theory: gun smoke **just makes Delsin stronger**, bullets not so much

Speaking of leeching, Delsin is a new breed of Conduit who can absorb his powers from other superheroes. Fire is the next obvious upgrade to smoke, and when it's combined with Delsin's ever-present chain, you get yourself a whip that's guaranteed to leave one helluva mark. Sucker Punch hasn't confirmed how many powers Delsin can collect, nor whether the process kills or deprives the original owner. If we were a betting folk, we'd put our money on some more morality decisions in the cards.

All we know for sure is that Sucker Punch is making certain our freakin' gnarly powers will be much easier to use. Go into this expecting more touchpad flicking and less 'claw-hand' movements on the shoulder buttons. Also, and unlike *Infamous 2*, the team is expressing the desire to take the 'power switching' and button re-assigning out of the mix. *Infamous: Second Son* will allow you to swiftly swap

between entire sets of powers that naturally complement each other.

We probably don't need to tell you this, because you have eyeballs of your own, but this game is looking every bit the system-seller. It's quite obvious now that the reveal trailer shown at the original PlayStation Meeting event was comprised of in-engine footage, (just from cinematic camera angles). It's amazing to see that, even at this early stage, Delsin's facial animation and nuanced expressions are easily on par with *Beyond: Two Souls*, the pinnacle of what the PS3 can produce.

Seattle, too, is a gorgeous play-space that comes complete with the majestic looking Mount Rainier, a climbable Space Needle, and an Easter Egg apartment unit that looks just like Dr. Fraiser Crane's (hopefully). Other jaw-dropping sights include individual leaves skipping down the streets, sumptuous neon lighting being reflected in street puddles, and some of the sexiest interactive smoke effects you're ever



Not that impressive. **We smoke after sex**

likely to see and not die from inhaling. Indeed, the only thing prettier than zipping through the world Sucker Punch's artists created, is tearing it apart with the all-new destructibility engine. Do a Thunder Drop style attack into some barracks and watch the bodies and structures fly!

Another piece of good news is that Delsin has an upbeat personality compared to Cole – though that wouldn't be hard. This new kid's a shit-stirring artist with a chip on his shoulder, and he's genuinely stoked to have his powers. Better yet, his underground graffiti tendencies serve as a meta-influence for the 2D cinematics. So far this guy seems pretty likeable; much more 'cool-hip Banksy' than teen-angst wankys.

Everything about *Infamous: Second Son* screams must-acquire, but we're also well aware that a lot of its nature is concealed behind the usual PR smokescreen. With a bit of luck we'll be able to penetrate that mysterious ash cloud at this year's E3. In the meantime, we definitely like what we see and can't wait to breathe in much, much more of it. **Adam Mathew**

They Say

"The fact that *Second Son* won't star Cole is the reason the game isn't being called *Infamous 3*. Sucker Punch wanted it to be clear that this was the start of a new chapter for the franchise"

We Say

So basically what you're saying is that you're *murderers*. You killed Cole off in cold blood.

Verdict



"Name's Jim. **Ice to make your acquaintance.**"

Lost Planet 3

Snow, monsters, sexy penguins

The Pitch

Uncover the colonial history and new truths about the foreboding planet E.D.N. III

Info

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: AUG 29
DISTRIBUTOR: AIE
DEVELOPER: SPARK
UNLIMITED
PLAYERS: 1 - TBA

There's nothing funny about sexing up a penguin; even if they're begging for it. It's a strange sentence to kick off a preview with, and one you'll not often see within the pages of this magazine, because quite frankly, we like to keep our personal lives, well... personal. *Lost Planet 3* on the other hand, seems to embrace it with open arms.

Yes, the line is indeed a direct quote from one of the sci-fi shooter's more outlandish characters, Crazy Neil: an Australian that sadly, you will never be able to control. Instead, you'll play as Jim Peyton, a Nicholas Cage look-alike and everyman colonist trying to take on some jobs and earn hazard pay on the snow-filled E.D.N. III, leaving his family behind in order to provide for them. The colonists already on the planet have discovered the power of thermal energy. They

know it's valuable, but are hoping it will solve the energy crisis currently threatening Earth — thus kicking off a futuristic gold rush. Because the ability to refine thermal energy is at that point a mystery, it means the resource won't be the restriction it once was, the timer that once threatened your well-being in the wild completely removed. Instead, it has been funnelled into the collectible route; a commodity used to build up your equipment and upgrade yourself into a lean, mean ice-monster killing machine.

And kill you shall. The early sections of combat we got to experience were smooth and free flowing, shooting anything and everything that moved. Jim can carry two long guns with him throughout his on-foot missions (like rifles and shotguns), but as an extra layer of comfort, you'll always have your pistol on hand, filled with an unlimited

stream of ammo. When we asked *Lost Planet's* Producer Andrew Szymanski what his response would be to people complaining that infinite bullets make proceedings too easy, he remained completely unfazed. "Let them," he laughed off. "I'd rather it be too easy than have people be too frustrated. We're not trying to be survival horror. There's horrific elements in the atmosphere, but we don't want that to be a limitation."

Speaking of horror, though, you wouldn't be the only one to start making comparison's to Visceral Games' *Dead Space 3*. After all, both games feature ice planets, tense environments and monsters that want to rip your face off. When we brought the point up as we slowly navigated our way through a claustrophobic cavern, filled to the brim with mysterious, yet almost certainly deadly explosive eggs, Szymanski

Confucius say: heat must travel faster than cold, because **it easy to catch cold**

Terraformers, **robots in the ice**

"I have to use the little boy's wee-wee room." **#cage**

Ice-cold **Fanta**, anyone?

That's some **good shooting** there, Jim

"[Piloting] Jim's new and improved rig [is] a surprisingly **smooth experience** with a good sense of **kinetic motion**"



seemed adamant on disputing the matter. "I think the big difference is that we use techniques to create atmosphere, but we're not necessarily looking to recreate the gameplay with jump scares and low ammo and all that. We're trying to keep it as action focused as possible."

Finally, we got our hands on Jim's new and improved rig; a surprisingly smooth experience with a good sense of kinetic motion that helps everything seem that little bit more realistic. It's a detail Spark Unlimited spent a lot of time tinkering with to perfect so as not to feel too flimsy. As we lumbered through a series of tunnels, we noticed numerous gates and pathways that were yet to be opened. As you progress in the main campaign, these areas will eventually unlock, allowing you to fast travel (a new feature to the series) around to

track down any well-hidden items or open up new story missions.

It also creates the opportunity to insert a few Metroidvania-esque sequences into the mix, presenting you with areas unattainable until you add a specific piece of equipment to your rig. Case in point: the winch, which allows you to fire the rig's claw arm, grab onto something and then zip-line across areas of the environment in search of potential goodies.

Once we'd ceased going to town on a bunch of baddies, we eventually returned to base – your main hub area. From there you'll have the option to either move forward with your objectives, upgrade your arsenal or simply walk around and talk to NPCs, some of whom can provide you with side quests to take part in further down the track. Plus, if you're a compulsive collector, there are

audio logs scattered about as well.

"The point of it is to provide as much juxtaposition as we can between Jim being out in the wilderness, alone and isolated and then coming back and having the human element of being in the base and interacting with all the characters," explains Szymanski.

As you gallivant about you'll notice just how beautiful *Lost Planet 3* looks, utilising the versatile Unreal Engine 3 while avoiding the brown sheen that plagues most other titles. Mo-cap performance and character models are also darn impressive.

By demo's end, we came out with two thoughts. The first: *Lost Planet 3* looks to be shaping up rather well and just might be a pleasant surprise come August. The second: sexing up a penguin will always be funny. Always.

Adam Guetti

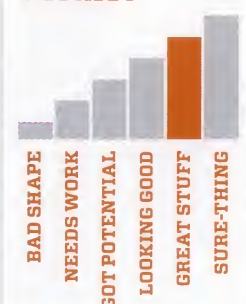
They Say

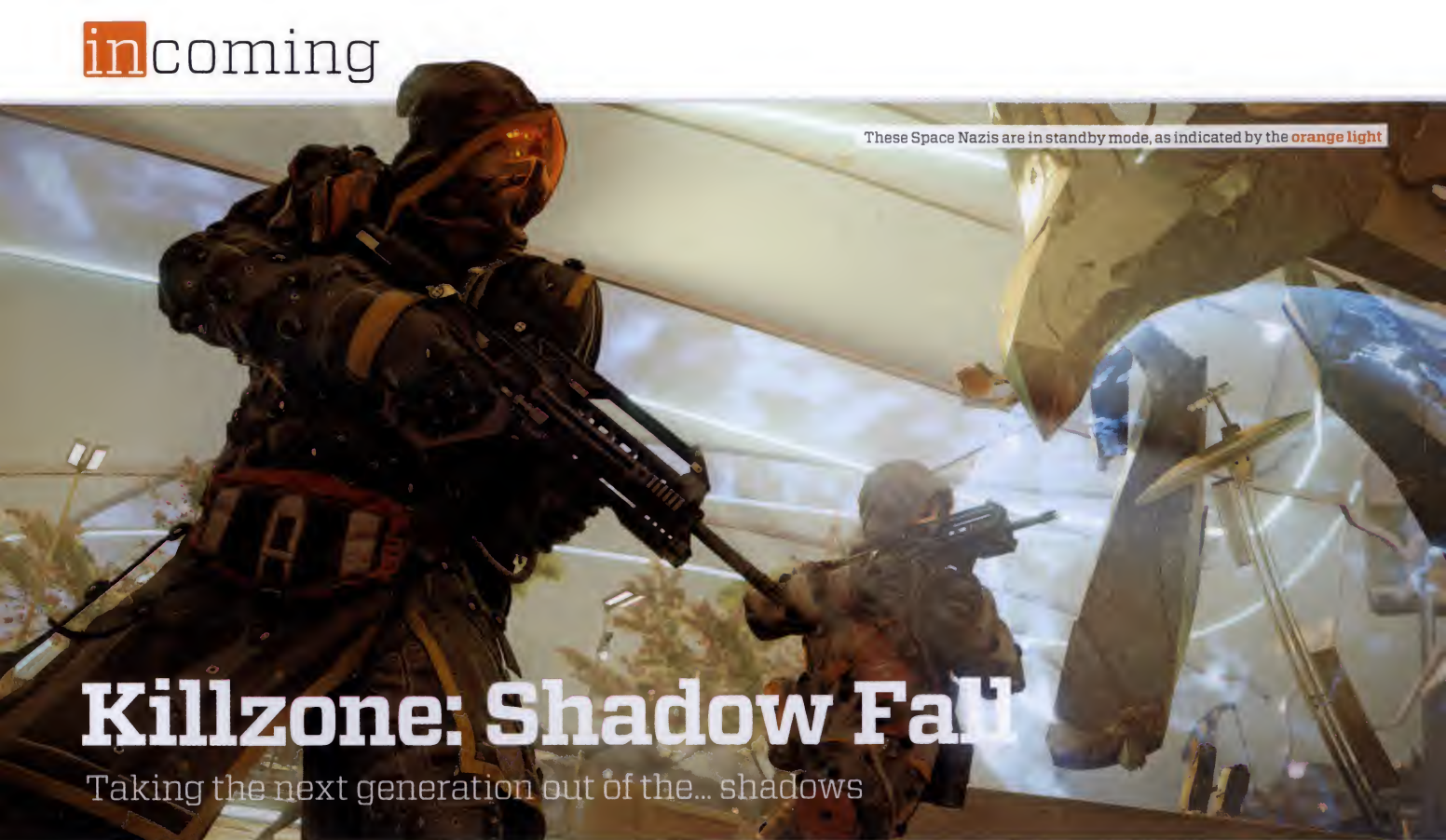
"*Lost Planet 3* will deliver a diverse range of gameplay including on-foot battles and intense first-person action."

We Say

There's a lot of fingers in a lot of pies, but at this stage, they're all looking mighty tasty.

Verdict





These Space Nazis are in standby mode, as indicated by the orange light

Killzone: Shadow Fall

Taking the next generation out of the... shadows

The Pitch

The cold war of the future hits devastating heights in a world dominated by fear.

Info

FORMAT: PS4

GENRE: SHOOTER

RELEASE: TBA

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA GAMES

PLAYERS: 1 - TBA

Considering most companies these days are leakier than the Titanic, it's impressive that Guerrilla Games kept not only *Killzone: Shadow Fall* under wraps, but an entire next-gen console as well.

Indeed it did so for almost two-and-a-half years, sworn to legally-binding secrecy, just in case. You need only remember that tiny share button on the new DualShock 4 to understand just how simple one little slip up could have set some clumsy dev on a fast track to snoozing with the fishes.

But while the PlayStation 4 was more than expected, *Killzone: Shadow Fall* remained a pleasant surprise — becoming one of the most stunning reveals of Sony's show. Creating a game for a new console generation based on a previously existing franchise obviously opens itself up to potential pitfalls — prime of which is uninformed and uninitiated newcomers with no knowledge of the series. With the start of *Shadow Fall* then, Guerrilla knew it had to do something different to everything the team had already done. The solution: gain about 30 years of distance from all of its predecessors.

As we've previously mentioned, *Shadow Fall* is set to open with tensions at an all-time high on the Vektan home planet. The concluding chapters of *Killzone 3* saw the land of the Helghast left virtually uninhabitable, leading Vektan authorities to eventually allow the Helghast to become the not-so-pretty girl next door. But if life has taught us anything aside from never, ever, licking a steak knife again, it's that if things sound too good to be true, that's because they probably are. As a result, differences eventually cause the two groups to butt heads and you, as an unfortunate peace keeper, are thrust in the middle of it all.

The studio didn't want to follow the clichéd route of turning every firefight into a Michael Bay action film, so the concept of an Iron Curtain in space, and a futuristic Cold War, quickly became a preferred alternative. By taking such a stance, it also gives the developers time to tell this brand new story and establish a credible setting — arguably a first for the series. A heavy emphasis is being placed on these warring ideals: the Helghast and their right for a place to call home and the Vektan's desperate attempts to keep their already-established way of life safe and sound.

Improved storytelling isn't the only update though, with combat receiving a few tweaks. While we already told you about new 'player choice', what we didn't know was the existence of multi-modal weapons. If you're using a close range weapon like a submachine gun, for example, you now have the option to flip up a scope that will make the gun more suited for long-ranged fun.

Sure these concepts aren't entirely new for the series, but with further mechanic tinkering in progress, we're hoping it adds to some drastic gameplay switches.

▀ Adam Guetti

They Say

"It's that believable world that we're after."

We Say

A stunning and believable world looks to be a shoe-in; we just hope there's solid gameplay to boot.

Verdict



"Excuse me, officer, could you direct me to the zone of killing?"

The Traveller: protector of Earth or giant bouncy ball?

Destiny

It was always Bungie's fate to develop for a Sony console

The Pitch

Mass Effect meets
The Fifth Element
meets *Borderlands 2*

Info

FORMAT: PS3, PS4
GENRE: SHOOTER
RELEASE: TBA
DISTRIBUTOR:
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: BUNGIE
PLAYERS: 1

Fusion makes everything taste sweeter. There's Batman vs. Wonder Woman in *Injustice: Gods Among Us*, Halle Berry of European and African-American descent, and now we've got Bungie's new IP, *Destiny*.

Originally envisioned as a fantasy epic Bungie decided the only thing cooler than ancient legends and 'swords with cool names' was a world mixed with that and the mystique of science fiction. It's an idea that penetrates deep into the DNA of *Destiny*'s universe, from the game's familiar yet strangely morphed, earthly environments, to the design of its world of characters

It shows you what 'space gold' would look like next to a futuristic assault rifle, buried deep in an ancient underground tomb located on the planet Venus. Or what images come to mind when you think of dying red forests on Mars, giant pyramid-shaped space ships soaring through space and men with the body of a bear and feet of a pig.

While *Destiny* has avoided creating the elusive man-bear-pig, its choice of character classes is just as sweet. There are three different races to choose from – the tough and noble human, the ghostly vampiric Awoken and the powerful Exo

(think terminator-style killing machines). Within these three races is another choice between specialized classes. The Titan – a powerful future soldier meets heavy space marine. The Hunter – agile travellers of the wilderness inspired by bounty explorers. The Warlock – a space wizard skilled in casting 'space magic'. But where things get really interesting is in the fusion. What's better than a terminator or a warlock? How about a robotic space wizard, or a vampiric space marine? Finally we can live out our fantasy of disfiguring a certain handsome bloodsucker with the latest futuristic guns.

Customisation also allows players to adjust their character's fashion through clothing, hairstyle and even apply make-up. On second thoughts *South Park* can keep its man-bear-pig.

The only thing that's tripped our ships radar is how *Destiny* will tell a tight or at least engaging narrative. An experience with no central protagonist and too much emphasis on scope could distance itself from smaller, more impactful stories. There's no doubt *Destiny* will be a shooter unlike any other but we're skeptical it can capture players attentions long enough to see it through a generation of gaming. Will you still be playing it in 2023? Let us know in a decade's time. **Martin Gladstone**

They Say

"That moment where we decided that the right thing was for us to do something big and commit the entire company to it...it's a big deal."

We Say

Bar the dramatic marketing speech this is looking to be quite the large undertaking. Let's just hope it's got heart too.

Verdict



Check out the size of his scope #epic

Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of Dubai



DriveClub

The first rule of *DriveClub* is... ah crap



The Pitch

Race on your own, or with some friends in a completely unified online world

Info

FORMAT: PS4

GENRE: RACING

RELEASE: TBA

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: EVOLUTION

STUDIOS

PLAYERS: 1 - TBA

It's an unspoken industry rule that, if you really want to show off your next-generation videogame system, you should do so with an insanely spectacular racing game.

For the PlayStation 4, most assumed that game would be *Gran Turismo 6*. But with Polyphony being Polyphony, nobody knows when the flagship franchise will be let out of the garage. That doesn't mean you can ease your foot off the pedal though because Evolution Studios has been quietly revving in the wings, ready to take you on the ride of your life with *DriveClub*.

Let's quickly re-cap what you probably already know. *DriveClub* is a team-based, online-focused racer, all about your status within the larger world, boosted through user-created race challenges. That's not to say you can't indulge in offline or single-player options, because if that floats your metaphorical boat, you absolutely can. But everything that you do will be tracked by the one single profile, no matter where in the game you might be.

Evolution want to change the way people look and think about racing games,

so user-generated race challenges will act as a playground for frequenters of the genre. Events can be created with all sorts of parameters like car type, time of day and weather. Add to that the ability to create lengthy multi-staged outings that span multiple locations with hundreds of teams and thousands of players.

At first glance, it all seems extremely ambitious, which perhaps explains the fact that *DriveClub* is a project that's been living in the minds of the Sony developer for years, patiently waiting until there was a system actually powerful enough to make it all a reality. The PlayStation 4 is that system; the developer even providing input on the console's specifications. That much-publicised 8GB of unified GDDR5 RAM – you can thank Evolution for that, the studio pushing to include the raw power to give games an extra spoonful of grunt to critical components like AI and graphics.

Tracks are built around giant open landscapes, all with huge draw distances and ready to find you the best and most challenging experience while still remaining accessible for the lower-skilled.

Accessibility is key after all, the game is not a strict simulation-based racer. It's not all that surprising if you think about it, especially considering Evolution's arcade history with the *MotorStorm* series. Instead, *DriveClub* will sit comfortably in the middle of arcade racers and full-fledged simulations, with touches of *MotorStorm*'s aggressive AI thrown in for added flavour.

DriveClub's damage module, which is bound to disappoint some, is purely superficial. The odd prang will result in visual changes to your pride and joy, the damage won't then influence how they handle. That minor loss aside, *DriveClub* may still have what it takes to keep pce with Polyphony. **Clint McCreadie**

They Say

"A playground for people who like to play racing games."

We Say

Everybody needs a good racing game, right? Let's hope Evolution can pull it off.

Verdict



TRUFAX: Most top-of-the-line sports cars are made entirely of papier-mâché

"Do you think we'll ever find a barber where you can get a decent haircut, Doctor?" "I dunno, Knack. I dunno..."



Knack

Ready for a knick-knack paddy whack?

The Pitch

A character action game reminiscent of old-school PlayStation classics

Info

FORMAT: PS4

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: TBA

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: SCE JAPAN

STUDIO

PLAYERS: 1 - TBA

By the conclusion of the PlayStation 4 reveal, there were a number of questions that whirled around our heads. What was the console going to look like? How much will it cost? Will us Aussies even see it by year's end? But right alongside these pressing issues was another, more left-field query that needed answering. What the hell is *Knack*?

The brain child of Mark Cerny, one of the maestros behind historic franchises like *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Crash Bandicoot* (and now the lead architect of the PS4), *Knack* is a brand new character action game; an element that Cerny believes is an intrinsic part of the 'PlayStation DNA'.

Within the world of *Knack*, humans coexist alongside a race of goblins who, for the most part, live a pretty primitive lifestyle in rugged rural areas. But like in any good tale, things don't stay peaceful for long, so the traditionally sketchy goblins manage to get their hands on some advanced military vehicles (think planes and tanks) and you can

bet your arse they know how to use them. So then, a team is assembled and sent off into the hinterlands to discover just how the goblins got their grubby hands on the tech and eliminate the threat in one fell swoop.

While this gob-squad will mostly be made up of human adventurers, you'll get to assume control of Knack – a small robot created by a scientist known only as The Doctor. Akin to the size of the similarly tiny Ratchet, Knack thankfully has a few tricks up his sleeve – prime of which is getting his hulk on. Yep, prepare for the title character to utilise the power to grow especially large by incorporating small crystal-like objects found in the environment. He won't even wait until he's at least angry.

With as many as 5,000 individual shards held by an invisible force seemingly generated by orbs, Knack can increase up to 30 feet in height – about 10 times his original size. In order to dodge the more dangerous elements like moving lasers, you can shed your larger form and become small again, opening up avenues for unique, constantly adapting environments. The developers have made it clear, however, that even though platforming has its place within *Knack*, the main focus is on the action and going into battle against dozens of unique enemies. Amplifying this is the collection of "sunstones" and relics which when obtained, unlock all sorts of super moves and abilities. These moves can go so far as to add shockwave melee attacks into your repertoire or just simply incorporate ice into your attacks.

Don't neglect the power of the PlayStation 4 either, enhancing Knack's ability to grow and shrink by individually modelling the thousands of pieces that he is made up of. It's a sign of things to come, and hopefully, these positive initial steps are indicative of a quality PS4 launch title for all to enjoy.

Clint McCreadie

They Say

"With *Knack*, we are really trying to take advantage of everything that the PS4 supports, from the graphics capabilities of the platform to the physics simulation necessary to handle our very unique hero."

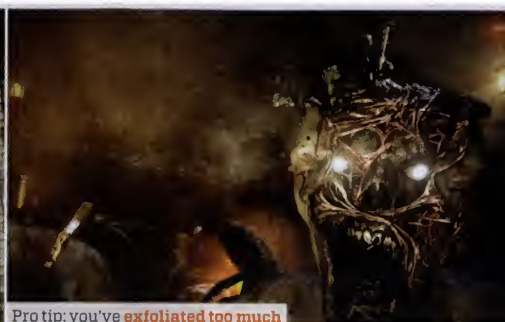
We Say

All well and good, but it's the gameplay that matters most... right?

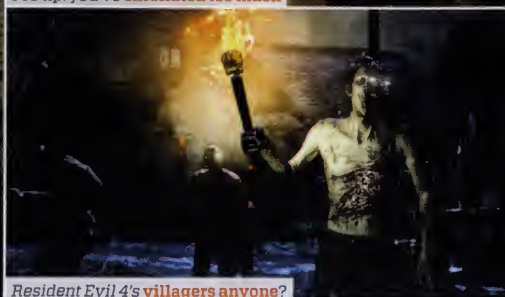
Verdict



There's only one word to describe a tank with rear spoilers, and that word is "radballs"

Audio cue: Lionel Richie *Dancing on the Ceiling*

Pro tip: you've exfoliated too much



Resident Evil 4's villagers anyone?

The Evil Within

You've never crapped your pants quite like this before

The Pitch

A true return to survival horror by the mastermind behind *Resident Evil*

Info

FORMAT: PS3/PS4
GENRE: ACTION-ADVENTURE
RELEASE: TBA 2014
DISTRIBUTOR: AIE
DEVELOPER: TANGO Gameworks
PLAYERS: 1 - TBA

If you were to just casually walk up to us in the street and say 'you know what, guys, I really think survival horror is a shadow of its former self,' we would probably reply with 'dude, we told you to stop following us!' Then we'd agree.

Resident Evil 6 and *Dead Space 3* are shining examples of survival horror increasingly relying on the crux of unabashed action to help try and keep things 'fresh'.

Shinji Mikami on the other hand, the original creator of the *Resident Evil* series, doesn't appear to have gotten the memo. Nope, instead he's giving us *The Evil Within* and he's on track to making us drop cargo in our pants.

Obviously, feeling a heavy degree of skepticism is natural, but the good news is that Mikami understands the problem at hand with the very genre he helped define. The often unpredictable creator admits that survival horror has been drifting away from what makes it survival horror. Now, the mission for his latest third-person survival horror is to present the perfect balance between horror and action; 'pure' survival horror if you will.

But enough jibber jabber, *The Evil Within* sets up Sebastian, an everyday, regular joe-schmoe detective called in to investigate a homicide at an inner-city asylum. Note: Sebastian is not a bulked up special forces agent ready for anything. This poor dude is merely out of his element in a pretty screwed-up world. That means your game time will be less about searching for a culprit and more about simply trying to find a way to stay alive.

And while yes, you will be given appropriate weapons, Mikami has made clear that it will not be the focal point to your survival. Guns won't be given much ammo, leaving you to utilise a number

of traps set throughout the game's environments in order to defeat enemies. Strategy will be the key in *The Evil Within*, not brawn. Plus it's all presented with some rather beautiful tech behind it all – namely the new id Tech 5 engine will make its way onto both the PS3 and PS4.

To ratchet up the tension, *The Evil Within* will feature a true cinematic 2.35:1 (a widescreen cinema standard) and a low-sitting camera. The view will stick closely over Sebastian's shoulder but will also display a whole lot of your surrounding environment at any given time, which is probably a good thing given the dangers it possesses.

Early enemies shown off are either giant chainsaw-wielding abominations, or slower moving zombie-like creatures wrapped in barbed wire or showered with glass shards. The goal for Art Director, Naoki Katakai, is to show a much larger evil at work. Enemies are still evil creatures, but there's something else causing them to suffer.

It's clear that *The Evil Within* holds a lot of promise, and if the reveal trailer is any indication, it'll scare the pants off players. We won't wear underwear then, just in case. **Adam Guetti**

They Say

"Highly-crafted environments, horrifying anxiety, and an intricate story weave together to create an immersive world that will bring players to the height of tension."

We Say

We might not have seen much, but we know enough to be very, very excited.

Verdict

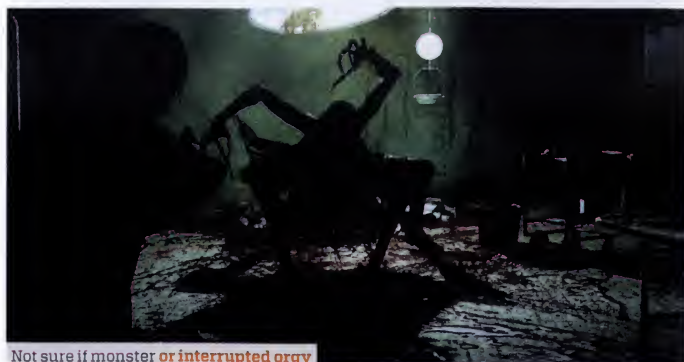


The name game

Keeping in line with *Resident Evil* / *Biohazard*, the Japanese version of *The Evil Within* has an alternate title, *PsychoBreak*.

"The game is about surviving in a world full of psychos and the goal is to break through such a world," says Mikami.

"Thus, the name *PsychoBreak*, where the word 'Psycho' is relative to horror and 'Break' is for survival."



Not sure if monster or interrupted orgy

Deadpool

Looks like SpiderMan, would make your mother blush

The Pitch

A mercenary for hire with an accelerated healing factor and even faster mouth.

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: JUNE 26

DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DEVELOPER: HIGH MOON STUDIOS

PLAYERS: 1

Of all the comic book characters to base a videogame off, Deadpool would have to be one of the more obscure choices. Not that he isn't highly regarded and loved, but in the world of the mainstream, his five minutes of fame came via that famously versatile dramatic talent (read: sarcasm) Ryan Reynolds.

Best put that sour taste out of your mouth, though, because the fast talking merc with a mouth is getting the virtual treatment by some of the best in the business: *Transformers: Fall of Cybertron* developer, High Moon Studios. The story might be old hat to you by now, but the combat is where it's all at, anyway.

Looking to take more than a few cues from action slashers like *DmC*, Deadpool will have access to quite the range of

weapons, all easily switchable on the fly. There's the classic sword and pistol fan-favourite – opening an array of combo attacks – as well as more creative options like the melee-centric dual sai or a pair of slow, yet devastating hammers.

The rapid action will quickly start nabbing you DP points (...) that can be used to purchase more goodies, like rifles or shotguns – all dictated by your preferred style of play.

Oh and just in case you're not a rabid Marvel fan who drowns themselves in lore, whenever Deadpool encounters another popular character from the rich universe, a cutscene (called 'Who The F--- Is That?') will appear offering more information about their history. High Moon can be pretty neat like that. **Adam Guetti**

They Say

"We got to do things in the Marvel world that nobody else does."

We Say

It's a rather ambiguous statement, but High Moon has shown once before it can handle a licence. Will lightning strike twice?

Verdict



Dragon's Crown

And you thought *Dead or Alive* was bad



The Pitch

An action fantasy RPG married with gamemaster-style storytelling as seen in *Etrian Odyssey*

Info

FORMAT: PS3, PS VITA

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: TBA

DISTRIBUTOR: TBA

DEVELOPER: VANILLAWARE/ATLUS

PLAYERS: 1 - 4

Watch any trailer for the upcoming brawler *Dragon's Crown* and you'll quickly notice some of the game's key... assets. According to its designer it's all exaggerated so that the game will stand out from other fantasy art. Okay, let's go with that one, shall we?

At its heart, *Dragon's Crown* is a homage to some of the '90's best side-scrolling brawlers and is filled with monsters and other-worldly elements reminiscent of *Dungeon and Dragons*. You'll kick things off by choosing one of six classes: a fighter, amazon, elf, dwarf, wizard or the

controversial sorceress. Each option comes with its own unique battle style, controls and tutorials to help guide you along.

Attacks themselves won't be basic single-press affairs, favouring flexibility and variation. Use directional button presses in combination with a sword swing while using a fighter, for example, and watch as he slides and jumps about.

Take control of the voluptuous sorceress, though, and you can create magic bursts at close range or take to the skies and shower your enemies below with a cavalcade of magic missiles. Ice-focused spells can also slow enemies, but one need only look at the fairly unprotective battle garment to deduce that this battler is more suited to hanging back from the action.

With drop-in multiplayer on offer for up to four players, *Dragon's Crown* looks set to work best with a bunch of pals making the most of each class. Just don't all go picking the sorceress. **Clint McCreadie**



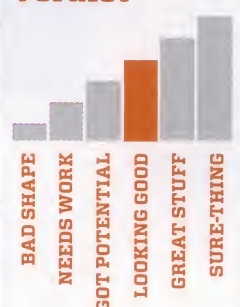
They Say

"Enjoy the ultimate game-master driven fantasy on your PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Vita."

We Say

Move past the controversy and you'll find a brawler with unexpected depth.

Verdict



MICHAEL

Once one of the most wanted men in America thanks to his reputation as a highly skilled bank robber, Michael is long retired, living in an informal witness protection program afforded to him by his powerful contacts inside federal agencies. He lives in a well-appointed mansion, complete with swimming pool and tennis court in the upscale neighbourhood of Rockford Hills. Despite his success, Michael is miserable: he's in a loveless marriage to his wife Amanda and he's disconnected from his two spoiled children, Tracey and Jimmy. On the surface, Michael appears to have everything, but inside he's bored, frustrated and seething. Michael's only outlets are spending his days drinking whiskey, watching old Vinewood action movies, the occasional visit to his therapist – and ultimately, returning to the life of crime that brought him to this position in the first place.







The level of detail lavished on each vehicle is spectacular, even by *GTA* standards

Trevor has bad gas, you see, to the point where his idle animation is a butt-picking check to see if he's followed through. He's also the meth-addled madman of *GTA V*'s three protagonists, so an unscheduled delivery downstairs really is the least of his worries.

We've just character swapped to Trevor, and like all of the unused avatars in *GTA V*, he's been running on autopilot, doing his own thing rather than artificially staring at a wall, waiting

for player control. We have no doubt he's been keeping himself busy without us.

It's early morning and our favourite sociopath is passed out on a beach in nothing but dirty white undies and socks. He's also covered in blood, holding a whiskey bottle and is surrounded by half a dozen dead bikies. Interestingly, they're all from the western chapter of *The Lost*, a group from the *GTA IV* DLCs. Their name is apt, because whatever the hell went down here, they sure didn't win.

Trevor is ridiculously unfazed by the corpse pile he's just woken up to. We soon have difficulty caring about the carnage, too, once the camera pans to reveal *GTA V*'s luscious wave tech and sunrise system. As Trevor stumbles toward a jetty, we gawk at the way the rising tide gobbles up our footprints and leaves shimmering wet sand in its wake. In next to no time we're skimming across those watery moguls in a stolen dinghy, getting respectable air and ploughing over wave ski riders who call us shithheads and cocksuckers for doing so. Trevor laughs maniacally.

Not much later, we whip out the scuba gear, dive headlong into the briny beauty, and experience what you *Red Dead* vets might call a 'crossing into Mexico moment'. A mesmerising melody organically fades in as we descend towards schools of coloured fish, coral reef caves and an obscene amount of underwater wreckage. You name it, it's been ditched here: old oil platforms, cars, even a sunken ship named *Safety First*.

As we're chuckling at the textbook *GTA* humour and admiring the god rays piercing down from above, two great white sharks torpedo toward us. We ascend to the surface and decide to leave Trevor to poop his pants for real amongst two circling dorsal fins.

Holding down on the D-pad initiates bullet-time and paints a character selection wheel in the lower right-hand corner of the screen. A left stick flick selects Franklin, *GTA V*'s answer to *San Andreas*' Carl 'CJ' Johnson. With the decision made, a satellite-style zoom and pan takes us from the Alamo Sea roughly a hundred kilometres east to the mountainous inland of Blaine County. This massive geographical shift



Stop us if you've heard this one before: two maniacs and a monkey walk into an auto-wreckers...



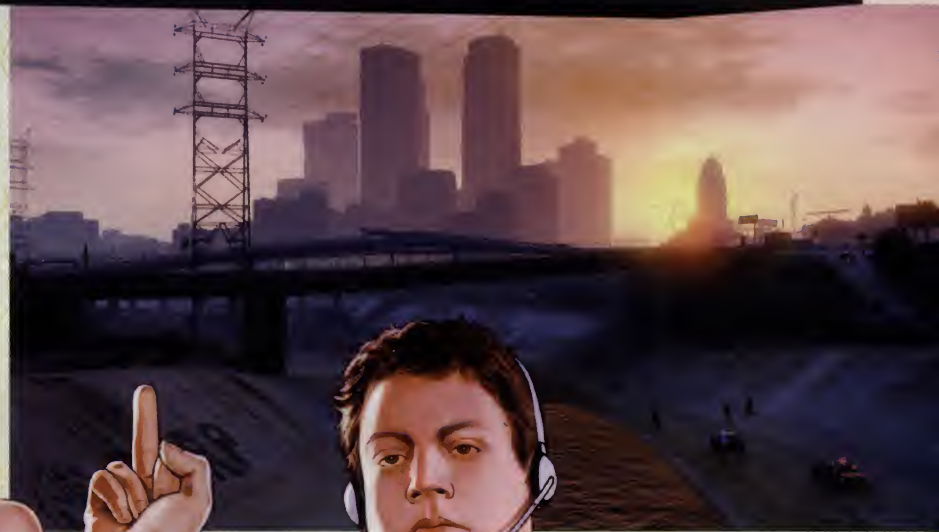
GTA V spreads across two major areas. The first is the sun-soaked metropolis of Los Santos, a dense urban environment full of self-help gurus, starlets and fading celebrities, once the envy of the Western world, now struggling to stay afloat in an era of economic uncertainty and cheap reality TV. It's a pisstake of real-life LA, so on top of the usual hustle and bustle of downtown



you can expect large multi-lane highways, winding coastal roads, and drained aqueducts for signature.

Gone In 60 Seconds chase scenes.

Head outside the city limits and you'll enter Blaine County. The geographical scope of this area is huge and spans mountains, rivers, lakes, beaches, sea beds, farms, and deserts. The entire world is populated with wildlife and inhabitants unique to specific areas, and has a 24-hour day/night cycle and complete weather.



Our favourite sociopath [Trevor] is passed out on a beach wearing nothing but dirty white undies and socks.

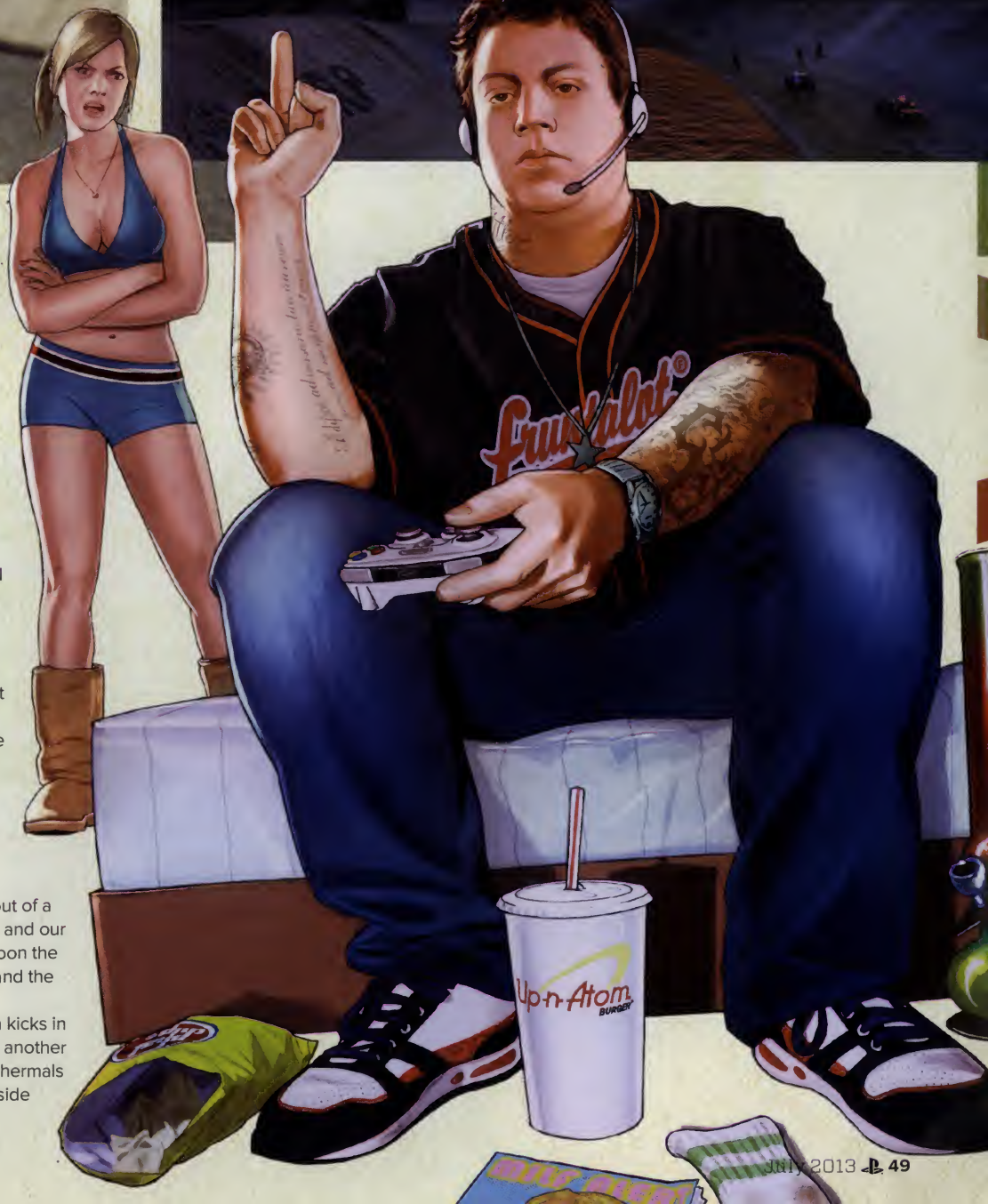
takes six seconds, we're told that the closer the characters are, the more rapid the swap.

FREEFALLIN' IN LOVE

We presumed GTA V was good-looking thanks to a postcard sunrise and the sort of *Finding Nemo* dive that must feature in David Attenborough's wet dreams. We knew nothing. Franklin is the extreme sports enthusiast of the group, and we switch to him just as he's about to do the sort of skydive that's bound to make *Just Cause 3* developer, Avalanche Studios, run back to its blackboard.

Our adrenaline junkie flings himself out of a helicopter hovering a few kilometres up, and our jaw drops faster than he does. At high noon the draw-distance goes until next Tuesday, and the wilderness below is teeming with life.

Better yet, the dynamic music system kicks in and a different ethereal tune lulls us into another Mexico moment. We gracefully ride the thermals through serpentine canyons, spying cliffside



FRANKLIN

Young, smart and ambitious, Franklin is comfortable working on either side of the law. Franklin works with his best friend Lamar repossessing cars for an unscrupulous Armenian car dealer by the name of Simeon Yetarian. His work there results in a chance encounter with Michael. Franklin loves his cars, is a very able driver, and lives in South Los Santos. Interesting trivia for graphics whores: Franklin alone has more textures than the entire ped population of *GTA: San Andreas*.



July



Come fly with me, let's fly, let's fly awaaaay



trails, curiously abandoned cars, and petrified deer running from a mountain lion. Pine trees whip past on our periphery as we finally stick a landing near a raging river. In next to no time we've passed two hikers and discovered an RV belonging to a nearby group of fishing hillbillies. Sick of the rustic life (and secretly worried that Rockstar is about to drop us into a dynamic event straight out of *Deliverance*) we character swap away to Michael, the rich middle-aged ex-gangster who hates his life and his wife.

Three seconds later we're dropped into the glamorous tinsel town of Vinewood. Curiously, the shift has advanced time to late afternoon; the peak hour traffic has thinned and the tourists taking selfies with their phones are in shorter supply. A d-pad flick causes Michael to dig into his sport jacket and retrieve his own iFruit. Its interface pops up on the lower right of our screen and is mercifully larger and easier to navigate than Niko Bellic's old brick POS. We cruise over to a movie theatre and take a first-person photo of a cosplayer dressed up as the Master Chief piss-take 'Commander' (from the *GTA IV* TV show Republican Space Rangers). According to Rockstar that image can be uploaded to a social media service that will be revealed more fully soon. We're also told that a nearby 'See the Stars' tour bus can indeed be ridden about town.

GLITZ IN THE MATRIX

Before we can press our Rockstar guide for more details – specifically, a list of which real-life actors are set to get reamed – our attention is diverted to a question mark on *GTA V*'s on-screen rectangular map. We're told that these represent



Missions can involve one protagonist, a combination of two, or all three. Each character brings something different to the table and you'll be encouraged to switch between them to suit your personal strategy. Michael's special ability is a bullet-time mechanic not unlike *Max Payne*'s. Franklin can similarly slow time when driving at high speeds. Trevor has a rage mode that amplifies his damage output, shrugs off incoming fire, and unleashes brutal melee moves.

Each of these 'Specials' is a limited resource that is best used strategically. We can also confirm that each character has their own increasable, easily-tracked stats ala CJ from *San Andreas*. Holding down the character switch button brings up a row of horizontal bar graph of stats, including Stamina, Shooting, Stealth, Flying, Driving, Mechanic, and Lung Capacity.

We gracefully ride the thermals through serpentine canyons, spying cliffside trails, abandoned cars, and petrified deer running from a mountain lion

dynamic events, and that this one in particular involves saving Lacey Jonas, a starlet who's been cornered in an alleyway by the paparazzi. We elbow past a growing crowd of photographers, carjack Lacey's sweet looking exotic, pick her up, and our epic burnout cuts a swathe through a sea of excited shutterbugs.

As Fergie's *Glamorous* pumps through the car's sound system, we're treated to a 'lose the paparazzi' chase and it's an impressive showcase of how the car handling and physics have evolved. Gone are the boat-like characteristics of *GTA IV*'s automobiles. What we saw was responsive and hair-raisingly fast. Our demoer (somehow) resists the urge to bump off the motorcyclists and their cameramen passengers, instead opting to lose them through the streets and up the winding roads to our actress's Vinewood Hills mansion.

The music has now changed to Kevin Rudolf's *Let It Rock*, and Lacey has been an ungrateful, egotistical douche the whole way through this chance encounter. But hey, the \$150 fare she



Players will have a range of options to consider when it comes time to plan a heist: points of entry, equipment requirements, assigned roles, and, for the bigger jobs, hired hands.

Various specialists will be available on a for-hire basis, and you get what you pay for. Be a tight-arse when it comes time to hire a safecracker, for example, and you'll give the 5-0 that much more time to respond when you trip an alarm. An income screen at the end of each Heist shows you how much the gross take for the job is, and how much the net is after you've paid off any expenses and employees. There's incentive to keep these jobs for your dysfunctional family of three, but that isn't always an option.

The more devils of you are probably already thinking "if Jimmy the shitty safecracker does happen to catch some ... "random" lead during the job, does that mean that's one less share to pay?" Maybe. Rockstar do say that specialist perma-death is a thing, and if they do survive their skills (and fees) will increase with each job.



handed over was worth it. (And we stole her car afterwards). Classic *GTA*.

It's clear that we could waste hours bombing around and dipping into incidental procedural events, but our Rockstar guide grabs the reins and shows us something more structured. It's a heist mission inspired by *GTA IV*'s best moment, the Three Leaf Clover bank robbery. Apparently it's just a small chunk of one of several high-paying and meticulously planned robberies we'll undertake as Michael, Trevor and Franklin. Just when we think *GTA V* can't get any better, it does.

THE TRIPOD IN ACTION

Money is important in *GTA V*, quite a bit more so than any previous entry in the series, where dosh was basically used to replenish your ammunition and not much more. Being cashed up here enables you to do a number of things from buying and customising the largest stash of weapons and vehicles in any *GTA* game ever, affording activities to boost your character's stats (see: +3 Skills) and buying property. And



It's hard to look cool on a dirt bike, but Franklin *almost* pulls it off

We're not talking modest villas and dinky little apartments. If you've got the Benjamins you can buy golf courses, marinas - hell, an airport if you want

we're not talking about modest villas and dinky little apartments. If you've got the Benjamins you can buy golf courses, marinas - hell, an airport if you want.

So how does one make the dough? You can earn decent scratch knocking over liquor stores, arms trafficking, cutting in on ATM robberies, or carrying out hits, but why be all small-time when you can go Michael Mann on The Man.



Droppin like this and like that, rat-a-tat-tat wit they caps peelin back

Throughout *GTA V* your band of misfits will undertake a series of increasingly elaborate heists. We're made privy to a 'Blitz Play', a kind of mission that shares some structural elements with the game's major jobs, all of which include preparatory missions where you must gather

equipment. We're told that Blitz Play only requires our three protagonists, not the hiring of an additional crew (which is another good reason to have money). As a simple smash and grab it doesn't require the sophisticated planning of a major scheme, and therefore doesn't net you an *Ocean's Eleven*-sized haul.

We assume we're at the midpoint of *GTA V* because our jagged alliance of characters seems to be extremely familiar with one another, to the point where they trust everybody's skill-sets and look thoroughly professional - at least they do until it comes time to display which masks they'll be wearing. Movie-obsessed Michael whips out a Jason hockey mask, stone cold gangbanger Franklin wears something from the *Army of Two* spring collection, Trevor busts out a gorilla head smoking a cigar.

After a bit of banter, Michael, clearly the



Character switching between these personalities during a mission can occur in several ways: during a cutscene, automatically during gameplay, or manually, and the circumstances will vary from mission to mission. Rockstar says these switches effectively eliminate the flat spots from missions, open the player up to new experiences in the game world much more quickly, and will propel us through the story in new and exciting ways, much like a TV series with multiple lead characters, experiencing the story from different perspectives without ever losing the main narrative thread.



In GTA, every vehicle is an off-road vehicle

We insta-switch to [Trevor] and aren't terribly shocked to see that he's swapped his sniper rifle for an RPG.

respected leader and most experienced, outlays a plan to neutralise an armoured car in a nearby industrial area. We use him to go steal a 'Little Prick' Trashmaster garbage truck, and drive it to our killzone and create a barricade. We character switch to Trevor who's providing overwatch with a sniper rifle one block away. "They comin' yet?" asks Michael as he exits the truck and takes up position with an LMG. Right on cue, our prey appears through the smoggy haze of the LA afternoon and we track it all the way in with the scope.

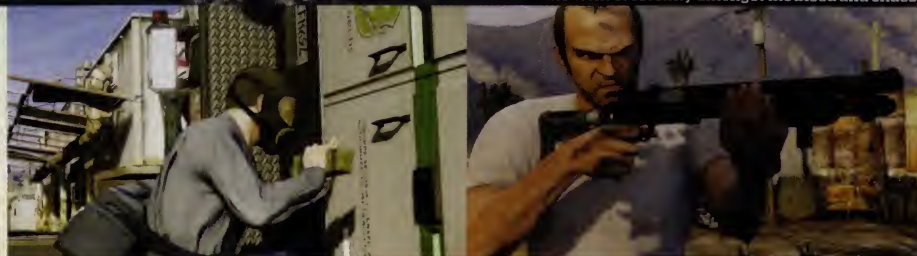
Rather than indulge Trevor's homicidal

tendencies and unleash the .50cal, we opt for a subtler approach, if you could call it that. A quick flick to Franklin drops us into the first-person view of a tow truck that's in danger of breaking the land speed record. We desperately slalom past boxes and dumpsters in a very long alley. With perfect timing we t-bone the armoured car with enough force to punch it through a low stone wall. This treats us to an action-cam showing the structure shattering like honeycomb hit with a 3-wood.

As Michael ransacks our prize catch a four-star wanted rating makes it blatantly obvious




A moment of serenity amongst the blood and chaos



that the drivers have sent out a distress call. 5-0 squad cars jack-in-the-box from every alley entry point. Thus begins the perfect opportunity to see how combat has been refined in GTA V.

The most obvious improvements are the ability to fire from the hip while maintaining full reticle control, and a 'pulled back' over-the-shoulder camera zoom. The latter offers us a much wider field of view and some extra spatial awareness to better assess and assault the first responders. Darting between cover is also a more viable tactic thanks to smoother transitions, the addition of a combat jog and an evasive commando roll. Last but not least, Rockstar has also added creature comforts including a reticle that turns red when painted on enemies and makes an 'x' when you waste somebody for realises.

Control and mechanic tweaks are all well

GUNPLAY

Here's the good news, gun nuts: this has the largest selection of weapons in any GTA game. Each character will favour their own unique weapon set, but you can also go tinkering around with silencers, scopes, extended mags, laser sights, and more.

and good, but the greatest feature of any GTA V firefight is the ability to character-switch to three professionals with unique skills. When Franklin, our frontline fighter, has to reload his assault rifle, we insta-switch to Michael and unleash some covering fire from a nearby balcony. The machine gun rounds punch into our victims with impressive localised damage and the squad cars shred apart magnificently. Even more remarkable is the dynamic battle chatter coming from Trevor as he calls in new targets from his perch and offers to even the odds. We insta-switch to him and aren't terribly shocked to see that he's swapped his sniper rifle for an RPG.

After aiming at a cluster of cop cars just beyond Franklin's cover, we pull the trigger and character-switch to said homie. It's here that we "know" that when the characters are in close proximity, switches are more or





TREVOR

A sociopath through and through, Trevor is an ex-army pilot who does what he wants when he wants to do it. Trevor and Michael worked together on criminal jobs prior to the events of the game, but that was a very long time ago. Trevor now lives in a trailer amongst the meth dealers and biker gangs out by the Alamo Sea, in Blaine County.

Obvious soundtrack choice: 'Back in Black' by AC/DC



GTA V will be an all-consuming event. You'll need to play it at least three times with Michael, Trevor, and Franklin to see what could have been

less instantaneous. The trail of Trevor's rocket singes past our head and punches into the gridlocked cops just beyond our cover. Squad cars cartwheel, flames spew forth, and doors punch off into the alleyway. A few of Los Santos' finest are slungshot from the firestorm, others are lit up like a Christmas tree and go flailing down the street. Before more back up arrives all of our team members pile into the garbage truck and make a tense, but ultimately uneventful, drive to a designated 'ditch point', underneath a nearby freeway overpass.

With cash split and post-job smart arse banter exchanged, we use Franklin to roll a live grenade underneath the disused garbage truck. Our band of bad-arses goes their separate ways. Franklin's getaway car of choice: a rather ironically named whip called a Fugitive.

It's at this point that our demo ends and we're left to ponder which we'd want to do next. On the one hand we feel the draw of the horizon. It's clear that Rockstar's creating the most diverse and responsive world yet seen in videogames. Cutting loose in Los Santos and seeing what random pursuits this dynamic world offers (see: Activities) would certainly eat up the hours. Especially when you consider this sandbox, a whopping five times the size of *Red*



Rockstar says there are hundreds of activities spread throughout the world for players to engage in, including:

■ **DETAILED MINIGAMES**

Base jumping, Off-Road Races, Hunting, ATM Robberies, and more.

■ **AMBIENT ACTIVITIES AND SIDE MISSIONS**

Hijack security vans, pick up hitchhikers, change tires for breakdowns.

■ **SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

Yoga, Golf, Tennis, Triathlons, Bike Races

■ **CHALLENGES**

Stunt jumps, flying challenges, and more

■ **PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

Player housing, garages, marinas, businesses, airports

■ **PLAYER CUSTOMISATION**

Tattoos, haircuts, clothing, wacky gorilla masks

■ **RIDE PIMPING**

Paintjobs, wheels, window tints, grills, spoilers

■ **PERFORMANCE TUNING**

Suspension, engine, brakes, and more

■ **GET META**

Watch more TV on your TV. Radio talkback's back, too

Dead Redemption's world, is completely open to players from the get go.

On the other hand, as *Heat* fans and lovers of slickly-scripted narratives in general, we feel just as strong a yearning towards *GTA V's* main story missions and its endearing protagonists. There's such a potent mix of personalities here: a street hustler looking for more, an ex-con father in the throes of a mid-life crisis, and a batshit insane wildman looking to overdose on adrenaline and any other substance he can get his hands on.

Layer in the fact that each of these characters offer unique abilities and can be switched between at will, and you're looking at a ludicrous amount of value for money and replayability. Speaking purely from a single-player perspective, *GTA V* will be an all-consuming event. You'll need to play it at least three times with Michael, Trevor and Franklin to see what could have been. And that's not even mentioning the online integration which Rockstar reckons will be "a brand new approach to multiplayer".

You should forget the polarising *GTA IV*, with its over-serious plot, down-sized sandbox, irritating phone calls, and physics-logged life simulations. *GTA V* is a different beast that's looking every bit like the sequel we've been dreaming about since the halcyon days of the PS2 and *San Andreas*.

Honestly, as professional and thorough reviewers of videogames, the size and scope of *GTA V* excites us just as much as it scares the absolute crap out of us. This is three games rolled seamlessly into one, an experience that will put you in the director's chair of your own hit TV series, or you can very happily ignore the script for hundreds of hours.

Excuse the enthusiasm, but this isn't just on track to be a serious contender for Game of the Year, it's poised to define a generation. September 17 is coming. Book your holidays now. 📺

New User Interface

- Balancing directional key operation and touch operation
- Quick response menu navigation
- Shortening of loading times (thank God)

The Real Driving Simulator

The last great race, pushing PS3 to its limits

So it's been 15 years since *Gran Turismo* first spun in a PlayStation? Madness. How can this be? That fact makes us feel two things: one, good God we're old – two, only six *GT* games got released in a decade and a half? Jesus, Polyphony, ease off the brakes.

As luck would have it, series creator Kazunori Yamauchi has done exactly that. At a recent *Gran Turismo* Anniversary event at Silverstone racetrack he's accelerated the franchise into the future by unveiling *Gran Turismo 6*, a sequel which – prepare yourself for the heart attack – shall be released in the same year it was first announced.

Surprisingly, *GT6* is currently only listed as a PS3 title, however Yamauchi has mentioned that Polyphony Digital, "[does] have a PlayStation 4 version in mind, but for this holiday season, [the team] thought it would be best for users to release on PS3 now." Not sure what we think about that. Waiting sucks, but buying what will soon become an old-gen version isn't a particularly attractive prospect.

New Physics Engine

- New suspension and kinematics model
- New tyre model
- New aerodynamics model
- Technical partnership with Yokohama Rubber and KW Automotive



Has crappy cars you'll never want to drive #classicGT



Safety Shmafety



Own a Merc? You might be a jerk



Leaving the competition behind




Check the higher HDR effects

"A sequel which [...] shall be **released in the same year it was first announced**"

Yamauchi also went on to say, "I thought the best scenario would be to have the game come out, then to have new scenarios, new DLC and other updates. Once the players have thoroughly played out the system, if the PlayStation 4 version came out naturally, as part of that process, I think that would be the best scenario."

Now, you'd think that if this did happen the most common-sense thing to do would be to allow the transference of PS3 *GT6* data to PS4. But no. Yamauchi is non-committal on this idea.

Early reports from the Silverstone event suggest that Polyphony's all-new physics engine is instantly noticeable, with some diehard *GT* enthusiasts going so far as to suggest that "going back to *Gran Turismo 5* after experiencing *GT6* will be difficult".

It's still early days yet for this, but consider us revved up already. 

1,200 Cars, abundant custom parts, and on-going DLC

- From historic cars to the latest racing cars, the game contains a total of 1200 cars.
- Multiple aerodynamic parts and custom wheels will be available for almost all cars.
- Players can create their own personalised custom car in the game.
- Cars will be continually added online

New-to-the-series cars

Alfa Romeo TZ3 Stradale '11
 Alpine A110 1600S '68
 Audi Sport Quattro S1 Rally Car '86
 Ferrari Dino 246 GT '71
 KTM X-BOW R '12
 Light Car Company Rocket '07
 Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3 '11
 Nissan GT-R Nismo GT3 N24 Schulze Motorsport
 Tesla Motors Model S Signature Performance '12

33 locations, 71 layouts

- 33 Locations and 71 layouts will be provided from Day 1 (7 more locations and 19 more layouts than GT5).
- Extra new tracks will continue to be dropped online



Worst case of tunnel vision we've ever seen

Thunder 'round Down Under

Though no mention of it was made at the event, overwhelming evidence suggests Bathurst will be a track in GT6. The sleuths at GTplanet.net recorded a data-collecting team who were out scanning the track for "Gran Turismo 6" – their words.

Scan on, honorable scan-men. Scan on



Pictured: the not-Bathurst

New Course Maker

- Massive scenery spanning several tens of square kilometres
- A new course generation algorithm

ALPHA

IN THE NIGHT

It's late in the evening and our fairly small standing area has been crammed with people. We're packed in like sardines, waiting for the next generation of gaming's biggest franchise, *Call of Duty*, to be officially unveiled. No sooner than we're ushered into a new room and seated, the lights are dimmed and Activision's own Eric Hirshberg casually takes the stage...

"I have to give a lot of speeches in this business, but I'm excited here today because we get to talk about the stuff we care about the most," he states confidently, kicking things off. The surrounding crowd is already beginning to grow restless as we wait for the inevitable. Well, that is until the *Call of Duty: Ghosts* logo appears on the large screen behind him. Now we're talking.

"Sometimes people like to write the story, or ask the question of how long *Call of Duty* will last. People like to ask if this series is cresting or has crested," Hirshberg continues. "And I know it seems like it should, but there's just one problem – it's not. In fact, by just about every measurement that we look at, *Call of Duty* has never been stronger. This franchise is not only still thriving, it's still growing. Game sales, sales of downloadable content, number of daily users, hours played – no matter what

you look at, this is a franchise that's still on the rise."

It's a speech that, in most cases, would cause eyes to roll, except for the fact that Activision's CEO has a point. *Call of Duty* has an incredibly large and dedicated fan base the world over, all of whom were obviously expecting 'Modern Warfare 4', but that's not what's in store for Infinity Ward's latest. That much is made very clear from the three points that now take over the main screen in giant capital letters. NEW WORLD. NEW ENGINE. NEW EXPERIENCES. According to both the developer and the publisher, neither will be caught resting on their laurels; a point that is continually hammered home throughout the entire presentation.

For those of you wondering, there was initially a plan to create a whole new arc in the *Modern Warfare* world,



but as the team began to develop new stories, these new ideas couldn't live within the *Modern Warfare* universe. They needed to start over on a new slate with a fresh world in which to tell a brand new story. Ultimately, they needed to do something different.

When Infinity Ward legend and *Ghosts* Executive Producer, Mark Rubin graces the stage, the elevator pitch of the game's story that we are given is brief. The game will open with a 'mass event' (Infinity Ward wouldn't divulge whether it was a nature-based or man-made scenario) and as a result, the government is thrown into disarray. While most military guardian angels have been taken out, remnants of Special Forces still remain. Together, these separate factions work together in this time of need and use every technique at their disposal on the battlefield. They become the Ghosts.

This potentially post-apocalyptic tale marks the series' first attempt to achieve deeply rooted emotional reality, and rather surprisingly, is all penned by Oscar winner writer/director, Stephen Gaghan.

"Gaghan was really interesting. We've used Hollywood writers before, but usually that experience is kind of interesting but is really limited," Rubin explains to us in his personal trailer once everything has quieted down. We've been casually chatting with the head honcho and eventually arrive on the topic of working with such a big name in the film industry.

"The writer is [usually] attached for two weeks and they'll work for those two weeks and then they're kind of done. With Gaghan



Pictured above: two figurative ghosts about to become literal ones



Back to our presentation and Rubin wants to show off the power of Sub-D and improvements in the technological world via real-time footage representative of the next-generation of consoles (pro tip: although it couldn't be officially admitted, that means PlayStation 4).

We're thrust into a beautifully dense forest,

improved particle effects and HDR lighting – one of the many technical advancements that *Ghosts* is touting.

At this point, Rubin explains that one of the benefits of Infinity Ward being based in Los Angeles is that the developers have access to a lot of Hollywood CG talent, hiring a number of CG artists over the last few years. Each of them has had a dramatic effect on this new tech bringing in new philosophies.

As if to showcase this, Rubin wants to pull back the curtain even further. We stop by a large collection of rocks resting by the edge of a river. The water physics are jaw-droppingly gorgeous, but that's not why we're here. Our attention is brought back to the rocks and their 'geometric glory'. But guys, we hear you lament, they're just rocks! At first we share a very similar thought process, until the switch that controls displacement mapping is turned off. As soon as it is, what was a realistic river bank now looks completely flat and uninspired.

The point is further enforced as we are steered towards a nearby wall. Gradually, the displacement mapping technology is added in and the engine determines on the fly what the geometry should look like, 'sub-dividing' the polygons and creating a whole new level of geometric details.

Finally we take a look at Sub-D, a process that enhances once blocky details by exponentially boosting the polygon count in real-time to create perfectly smooth curves. If all this tech gobble is going over your head, you're not alone. To explain it via the power of pictures, a weapon from *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3* is brought up on the screen. We zoom in on the scope and see the jaggy outline plain as day. It almost resembles a large hexagon. The weapon then transitions to one from *Ghosts* and the difference between the pair is unbelievable. Jaggies are gone, replaced instead by a one wonderfully smooth surface – powered by Sub-D. If this

THIS POTENTIALLY POST-APOCALYPTIC TALE MARKS THE SERIES' FIRST ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE DEEPLY ROOTED EMOTIONAL REALITY

it has been really different. He's now in the office. He has his own office and he's there every day for the last I don't know how many months. He stays late with us, he eats dinner with us, he plays ping pong with the guys... he's a part of the team now. He's invested himself into this more than I've seen from a Hollywood writer in my entire career."

Narrative has never really been one of *Call of Duty*'s strong suits, acting as a reason to blow shit up more than anything else, so the presence of high-calibre talent behind the scenes excites us and fills us with hope.

and are instantly impressed with what we're seeing. Enemy AI has been removed for the demonstration so that means we have plenty of time to absorb the scenery. Flocks of birds are soaring in the sky and groups of tiny insects buzz around your face, like the nonsense they often are. As we strain our ears, we even manage to take note of the faint sounds of the painfully annoying mosquito. As we gradually move up the hill, the level's sunshine becomes more apparent, poking its way through the branches of the trees above us and made all the more real thanks to both

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH MULTIPLAYER?

Naturally being fairly early in the reveal process, Infinity Ward was extremely tight lipped about the meat and potatoes of the *Call of Duty* series. Thankfully, though, Rubin did share snippets of information on how *Ghosts* will revamp the critical element, and it's all thanks to Dynamic Maps. With everything from large scale earthquakes and floods, right down to player-driven actions such as explosive traps and things that will change the flow of the map, all of these elements will create a new dynamic experience for you, the player, no matter if it's a large map changing event or a gameplay mechanic that you need to work with in order to win the game.

Another new feature the developer is stressing is greater character customisation and personalisation. With *Ghosts*, you'll now be able to choose your head, body and type of the gear that adorns your warrior, helping you to connect with who you are as a player more than ever before. More information on the rest of the 'innovations' as we know it.

CRY HAVOC AND LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR

One element not shown in our demo, but was surely noted by us in the game's reveal trailer is the inclusion of dogs. These puppies (terrible pun intended) aren't perks, rather they have substantial involvement in the campaign.

"Early on we thought oh it would be really cool if we could see what it would be like to have a dog in our squad and see how that would play out. We didn't know anything so we had a retired Navy Seal come out to the studio with his dog - the one you'll actually see modelled in the imagery - and we had him tell stories of how the dog works in the squad, and not just the emotional aspect of that but the technical aspect of it."

Dog-based antics? Our ears pricked up at the thought as we

allowed Rubin to explain even more. "The tech is amazing. You've seen the vest that the dog is wearing? That's a real vest. He [the Seal] brought it in and we took pictures."



A closer look at the vest reveals an interesting element - a little periscope camera on the back that can pop up. According to Rubin the Seal is then in possession of a screen on his arm that allows him to see what's coming out of that camera.

On top of that, the dog is wearing an ear piece, so he [the Seal] can give commands to the

dog vocally as if he's a squad member and guide it through areas as he watches it all on the screen. Plus, if they need to be super quiet and not say anything at all, the dog has these two vibrating things on his neck, so he can push a button that vibrates the right one and tells the dog it needs to go right."

It's intriguing to learn these fairly unknown military techniques and the amazing tech that goes along with the training. "When we found all this stuff out it kind of blew us away so we were like we have to put a dog in the game." And no expense has been spared, the animal's receiving the same amount of motion-capture as human characters did.

It made us wonder, though, surely some of these developments would have to translate to in-game mechanics during Ghost's campaign?

"I would expect so," Rubin answers with a large approving grin on his face.

is the future, we're all for it because this new technology allows Infinity Ward to take the visual fidelity of its models to another level.

By the time the technical demonstration is over, the vast differences between the tired *Call of Duty* Engine and this next-gen iteration are simply astounding, but considering it's been powering the series for nigh on a decade, it's not all that surprising. It did make us wonder, though, why wait until now?

"I don't know about a wait, we never thought about it as a wait," Rubin quickly shoots back to us when we question it. "Every time it's our turn to make a game we just sort of make the game as we see fit and change the engine as appropriate. Part of it is, I think, the technical hurdle. The next-generation


is opening up doors we maybe didn't see before. On a positive note though, this engine is actually beneficial to current generations as well. So we've been talking about new engine, new engine, new engine and we've been hinting at it all being next-gen, but the fact of the matter is that the current-gen is benefiting from this new engine, too.

While that might sound like you're in for a mind-blowing PlayStation 3 port that packs all the same features, sadly that isn't necessarily the case. While he wouldn't go into exact specifics on the matter, Rubin did let us in on one small insight. "What you saw today [the tech demonstration], two of the features that I talked about - the displacement mapping and the Sub-D - are only possible on the next

IT'S ALL IN THE NUMBERS

Surprised that Infinity Ward isn't working on *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 4*? No need to feel like a chump because you're definitely not alone. According to Eric Hirshberg "When I was offstage I typed in *Modern Warfare 4* into Google and there are 122 million search results for it - a game that doesn't exist. Then I got curious and typed in *The Dark Knight Rises* - a sequel that does exist and did fairly well in the world - and there is only 116 million results for that." Seems like we all got fooled on that one.





TO GHOST OR NOT TO GHOST?

When *Call of Duty: Ghosts* was first leaked, speculation non-surprisingly ran rampant. But one theory continually crept up above all the rest: the involvement of *Modern Warfare 2* favourite, Ghost. The bad-arse soldier with a troubled childhood who has a whole comic series to his name unexpectedly resonated with players after release. Suffice it to say, however, Rubin revealed to us that the sunglasses-wearing 'cool dude' will not be in *Ghosts* whatsoever. "It's funny, you're the first person to ask that," he laughs. "But no, actually not. It really is a totally new universe. The only ties and I will admit it is a tie, is that when we were coming up with this unit - the special unit in the game - we felt like ghost was a bit of homage to something we all loved. That's as far as it goes though. And what about the masks the Ghosts wear? It's a nod, but set within its own universe."

generation. They use advanced tessellation you techniques that aren't available on the current generation."

Tech will only get you so far, though, so thankfully, despite refusing to share too much, our presentation is closed out with a gameplay demonstration: the opening section of a demo that we are assured will be showcased in more detail in the future.

As the lights dim once again, the black background on the giant screen fades into our soldier launching into

a group of enemy divers jump off the boats and enter the foreign territory. No need to worry, though. We'll have them sleeping with the fishes soon enough. Carefully, we line up our shot and easily take down our foes, watching as their bodies instantly turn limp. Despite dishing out the death card, we can't help but notice the ripple effects the bullets create throughout the water. If we weren't so worried about copping a bullet to the noggin ourselves, we probably would have stared at it a little longer, but we're soldiers dammit, so we continue our journey.

Before long we stumble upon an old sunken ship and everything fades to black.

REALISM IS A KEY CHARACTERISTIC FOR *GHOSTS* AND ALREADY IT LOOKS TO BE SUCCEEDING

the open sea, scuba gear in toe and rifle in hand. Before the resulting bubbles caused by our drop begin to surround us, we're off and moving, following our leader as they mutter mindless chatter into our earpiece from afar.


Watching the demonstration run silky-smooth, it's easy to see all the new technical improvements working with each other to great effect. The ocean floor is littered with all sorts of marine life and will surely make you think back to our country's own barrier reef, only slightly less majestic. It's a comparison that is soon forgotten as a giant shark makes its way past our visor, closely followed by schools of fish. Realism is a key characteristic for *Ghosts* and already it looks to be succeeding.

Soon enough we spot two small boats above us – an enemy patrol on the prowl. Before we have a chance to give it a second thought,

We're guessing there's some extra snooping to be done here, but in the interest of time our demo is shot forward, this time putting us back in the action as we tail a ship much too fast for our little flippers to keep up with. It does lead us towards a strange collection of shipping containers that have piled up, which ends with the discovery of a submerged lighthouse. The irony of the building designed to prevent sinking ships itself resting on the ocean floor is not lost on us.

There's not much time to go exploring, as we quickly whip out an underwater missile and steer it in traditional *Call of Duty* fashion towards an enemy ship (our guess is that it's the same one from before) to achieve a destructive end game. Foolishly, we slept through 'Underwater Explosives 101' so we're taken aback by the devastation the explosion creates around us. The blowback is so great that it actually causes the lighthouse's foundations to crumble even more. Glass shatters and walls begin to collapse... right on top of us, inconveniently pinning us down.

Our friend comes to our aid to assist us with the rubble, yet all the while a mass of enemies appear not too far in the distance. The shit is just about to hit the non-existent fan, but just before it does, our demo ends.

Outside of this small scoop, Infinity Ward thus far are disappointingly keeping most of its cards very close to its chest. The team has merely whet our appetite, but now we're salivating for more. Sure it's looking pretty damn good but it's all gloss and no substance at the moment. We keen to discover more, we just hope it's soon. 



THE MAN BEHIND THE GUN

If you're a bit of a film buff, chances are you've seen the name Stephenaghan before on many an IMDB page. The 48-year-old writer and director has been behind the camera and page for a number of emotionally taxing and controversial projects.

Take 2005's *Syriana* for example – a politically charged thriller he directed about the state of the oil industry that led to old-time heartthrob George Clooney landing himself an Oscar. Then there is *Traffic* – a hard-hitting drama about the

escalating war against drugs and the power of addiction to which he penned the screenplay for.aghan possesses an exceptionally impressive track record, has refined his craft to an art form and has even directed the mighty Samuel L. Jackson.

Does this mean that *Call of Duty: Ghosts* is likely to adopt a rather serious approach towards the political minefield post 'event' and will delve into the inner dramas of the American government as the world begins to destroy itself? It's certainly starting to look that way.

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M3070PS

A man with a beard, wearing a black cowboy hat and a dark vest over a light-colored shirt, is looking down at a laptop. He is wearing black gloves. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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in review



► GAME OF THE MONTH

Grid 2

Make some vroom in your game collection

Review ratings

10 Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be *perfect*. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an incredible fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible kudos.

9 Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few too many minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the best in its genre, a 9 comes with very high praise.

8 Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a handful of mild to moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

6 Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

5 Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but with the quality games we do have, there's no need to drop real money on a game that half sucks.

4 Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

3 Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

2 Terrible: Nothing good here, and definitely not worth removing the wrapper.

1 The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality. If a 10 is better than virtually every game available, a 1 is worse than virtually every game available. OPS has handed out this score only once.

This Month

70 Resident Evil Revelations

72 Remember Me

74 Grid 2

76 Muramasa Rebirth

77 Star Trek: The Video Game

78 Soul Sacrifice

79 God Mode

79 Thomas Was Alone

80 Darkstalkers Resurrection

80 Zombie Tycoon 2: Brainhov's Revenge



▼ We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Sony Bravia for the best picture possible.



"Jill... Jiiiiilll... tell us where you got that sweet backpack..." "NEVER!"



Resident Evil Revelations

It's wearing its big boy pants for consoles

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: SURVIVAL HORROR

RELEASE: MAY 23

DISTRIBUTOR: CAPCOM

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PLAYERS: 1 - 2

RRP: \$59.95

▶ PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:
RUNNING AND SHOOTING
AT THE SAME TIME

Most of the time a HD makeover doesn't really translate to all that much. Sure, glorious high definition graphics are the bomb and who doesn't love stereophonically enhanced sound to make your earhole sing with joy, but brushing all the surface sheen aside, it all comes down to the strength of the original title itself.

It's no surprise titles such as *Ico* and *Shadow of the Colossus Collection HD* and *Okami HD* fared so well. The core gameplay was more than solid and endures the test of time. It's all about a strong foundation to build on. Don't believe us? Take a look at the *Dragonball Z: Budokai HD Collection* and tell us how well you think that holds up (Sorry Namco Bandai).

We hear tell that the original *Resident Evil Revelations* was one hell of a beautifully crafted game (for Nintendo 3DS, at least). To label this as a mere HD reboot would be doing it, and the gameplay which powers it, a huge disservice.

The cut-scenes have been spectacularly re-rendered and really are quite stunning. The unique touch screen and dual screen features have been thoughtfully re-mapped to comfortably fit the PS3 DualShock control scheme. In a nutshell it all just works an absolute treat and looks god damned sweet. This version of the game simply can't be beat (no more rhymes, we promise).

Resident Evil Revelations is a throwback in every sense of the word.

Working through episodic content in pairs (with each new pairing bringing with it a new weapon set) you are charged with investigating a derelict ship, the Queen Zenobia. You'll play with a collection of *Resident Evil* characters, some old and beloved, some new, but the focus is on the ever sexy Jill Valentine as she tries to locate the now missing and always dreamy Chris Redfield.

Gameplay is classic *Resident Evil* (in a good way) with the usual spooky mansion replaced with this dimly lit and mutation infested ship. In fact, these sections are where the game shines even brighter. As the direction shifts to other characters in flashbacks and flash sideways, the more open environments lead to a loss of tension. That's not necessarily a bad thing, either.

When you're not pumping your ever diminishing ammunition into unholy abominations you'll be surveying your surroundings and gathering Intel with your handy new scanner function. Scanning corpses of the newly re-deceased will yield extra health items which can often make the difference between life and death at crunch time. It's science, you can't argue with that.

The pacing of *Resident Evil Revelations* feels just right too. The cramped and spooky encounters you'll face on the Queen Zenobia, as you backtrack and explore previously sealed off areas, are neatly balanced out with more action oriented breathers (and even turrets!) and creature feature cataloguing expeditions.



That is one forking weird zombie

"It all works a treat and looks god damned sweet. **This version of the game simply can't be beat**"

Chris Redfield is listening to 'Zombie' by The Cranberries on Spotify

Not even a mother could love a face like that

All the typical gameplay you know and love is present. You'll be dosing up on herbs to regain health, ammunition is scarce and enemy types soak up rounds like an Irishman in "Dry July".

To help you deal with more powerful enemies and dwindling ammunition reserves a dodge mechanic has also been included. It provides a real risk versus reward feeling of triumph if you manage to pull it off. It also leaves you in a prime position to bring the pain with a powerful melee strike while your enemy's vulnerable. Poetry.

The control scheme is quite possibly the most intuitive we've ever seen, flawlessly implemented and easily

executed. Aim and fire are mapped to **LT** and **RT** respectively, **LB** brings up your scanner and melee is **LT** on its own. It's so damned simple and makes complete sense. You'll be effortlessly and unconsciously flipping the triggers and bumpers on the fly and wondering why such a layout hasn't been done sooner. We sure as hell were.

In game character models look identical to those you see in the cut scenes, really nailing the immersion factor and it is a damn fine looking game for the most part. The usual doom and gloom grey and brown filters infuse the colour palate and while the texturing is pretty solid, a few cracks

do bleed through. Shadows can be a bit naff and obviously pixelated at times and the draw distance and backgrounds can have that mapped painting kind of feeling.

If more recent *Resident Evil* offerings have had you shaking your head in disbelief ("cough Raccoon City cough"), *Resident Evil Revelations* steadies the ship for the franchise. It provides perfect bite-sized chunks of gameplay, easily digested and the higher difficulty levels will have you howling in frustration. Welcome back *Resi*, we've missed you.

Dave Kozicki

Final Say

PRESENTATION The retexturing is stunning, though facial animations can be a little stiff.

SOUND Sparse yet damned creepy maximising atmosphere, chills and thrills.

CONTROLS Thoughtfully mapped to optimise functionality for consoles with an intuitive layout.

REPLAY VALUE Its episodic breakdown, varied difficulty levels and Raid mode will have you coming back for more.

Verdict

It's pretty hard to resist at its budget price. It's the best Resident Evil release we've played in years.

8

The Raid

Rather than having to knock out the campaign before unlocking bonus modes and insane difficulty levels, Capcom has considered gamers may just own more than a single console and previously played the 3DS version. Right out of the box you get Raid mode (co-op survival/horde mode) with hunky Hunk and ravishing Rachel and for masochists, Infernal mode, also known as 'stab yourself in the crotch repeatedly with an ice-pick' mode. This puppy has different item and enemy spawn locations with beasties so tough they'll laugh in the face of danger, your bullets and say some very disconcerting things about your mother. Bastards.



"Remember when you used to be able to have children?"

Remember Me

Remember, remember, the glitch of the future, memory reaping and clot

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: CAPCOM

DEVELOPER: DONTNOD

ENTERTAINMENT

PLAYERS: 1

RRP: \$89.95

▶ PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:

BATMAN: ARKHAM
ASYLUM

When *Batman: Arkham Asylum* dazzled the gaming world with its jaw-smashing freeflow combat system, we knew it was a game changer. A new standard had been set for what would knock players out in terms of the minimum expectations for a third-person action-adventure game.

Other games were bound to adopt this addictive gameplay mechanic or straight-out lift it and thankfully, *Remember Me* errs on the side of adoption, all the while adding its own moves to keep fighting things fresh.

You play as Nilin, a renowned ex-memory hunter for the nefarious Memorize corporation that borrows and steals memories, and even offers to remember it for you wholesale.

Nilin comes to in a cell, as the vast majority of her precious memories are being painfully extracted from her sub-conscious. After a short prologue section that doubles as basic training, Nilin is contacted by the mysterious Edge: a character who is part of a resistance against Memorize's memory monopoly and is eager to get you to safety as he's convinced you're the only person who can help knock down the dynasty from bottom to top.

Once outside, *Remember Me* quickly shows that it is very much a Capcom-flavoured game. Often, stunning visuals in a beautifully realised 2084 Paris (dubbed Neo-Paris), and a solid mechanical foundation are offset by start/stop gameplay – particularly early in the game – with an abundance

of cutscenes. And yet while the cutscenes are more distracting than necessary in the first half of the game, the depth of the narrative comes into its own in the second half when non-interactive interludes deliver an emotional wallop on par with the joyful impact of the customisable fighting experience.

You're going to spend a lot of your time punching and kicking your way through the City 17-like city, the bulk of which will be done by alternating between **A** and **B**. The base mechanics really are that simple, but it's the inclusion of the 'Combo Lab' that offers the tantalising prospect of customisable combos – buffing the player as you lay into waves of enemies all too willing to take on the role of mobile punching bags.

As you progress and earn Procedural Mastering Points for access to further PMP-slapping abilities, you unlock 'Pressens', which are Nilin's forgotten fighting moves. As these **B** and **A** allocated moves are unlocked, you can assign them to increasingly longer combo slots for dishing out the hurt. The problem is the enemies seem very resilient to knuckle sandwiches, and even intricate end-game combos tend to take longer than expected to floor an enemy for good. There's a strong mini-game of cat and mouse in every fight, though, as you pick when to attack and when to evade incoming strikes; which, granted, are flagged harder than amateur wrestler blows.

Another cool component of the

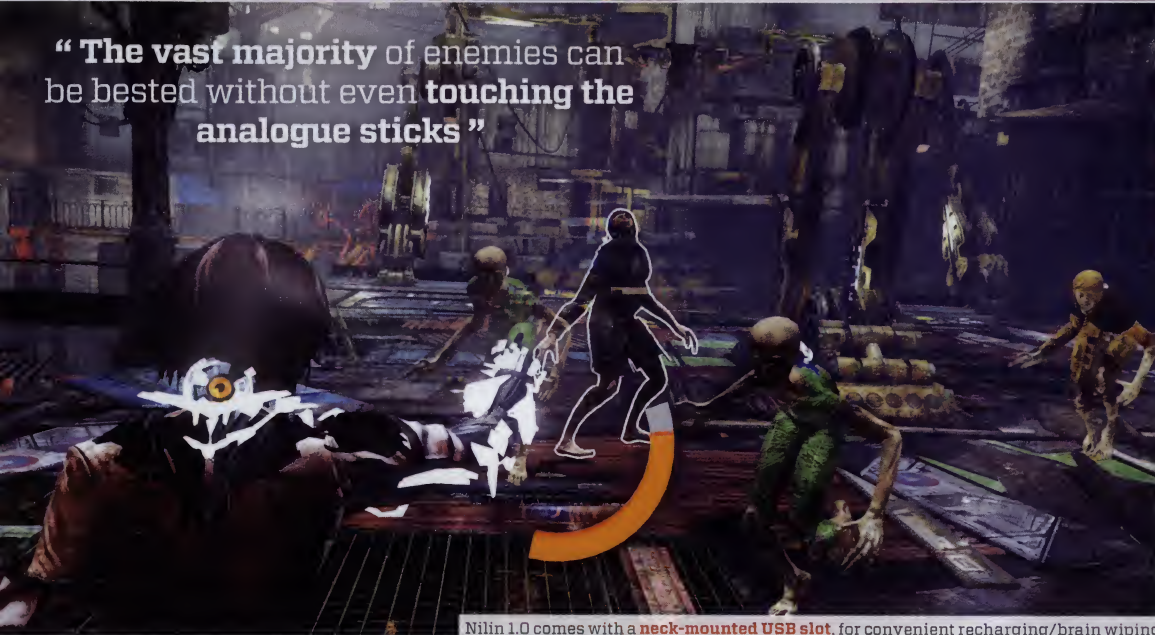


How do you say "I'm going to smash your stupid robot face" in French?



Parisian nightclubs are weird

“The vast majority of enemies can be bested without even touching the analogue sticks”



Nilin 1.0 comes with a neck-mounted USB slot, for convenient recharging/brain wiping

combo system is that Pressens are broken down into categories such as health regeneration, additional damage and cooldown strikes. In practical terms, this adds a level of tactical depth to how you distribute your Pressens, as certain combos are fantastic for boosting health, while others are best used for recharging the powerful S-Pressen attacks that have lengthy cooldowns and are vital in bigger fights. The downside though is you'll really only experience the full potential of this system in the second half of the game, which can make the combo system feel stale early on even though you can technically change them at any point.

When you're surrounded the combat feels great – until you figure out that a lot of fights are more about timing than skill, meaning the vast majority of enemies can be bested without even

touching the analogue sticks.

Combat sections are broken up by an abundance of platforming, which is sometimes frustrating when certain fixed camera angles clash with the controls, and always too easy as there's an ever-present yellow marker telling you exactly where you need to move to next. There's a small degree of freedom, but it would have been nice for a greater emphasis on exploration of the incredibly realised Neo-Paris locale.

By far the coolest feature of *Remember Me* though is the sporadic appearance of the incredibly clever 'Memory Remixes'. There are only four in total, which is a shame given how fascinating they are in terms of the narrative and how they act as a great puzzle mechanic. These sections require you to jump into someone's memory to change the way they recall

a pivotal life event which, in turn, influences their motivations in the present. You rewind and fast-forward the memory, which alters based on manipulable interactive elements. It's like playing *Minority Report* with people's recollections, and you need to find the right combination of variables to ensure the desired outcome, which become increasingly layered in later Remixes.

There's so much potential at play in *Remember Me* that we feel compelled to belabour the cons to emphasise what could have been with the abundance of strong ideas, well-paced narrative beats and an intuitive game soundtrack (that dynamically changes and complements your beatbox efforts on enemies' faces). It gets more right than it gets wrong though, and it leaves us yearning for a sequel that addresses its unfortunate shortcomings.

Remember Me isn't quite the memorable experience promised by its potential, but it's certainly not a forgettable one either.

Nathan Lawrence



The grey overlay indicates that Nilin is using her freaky memory powers

Final Say

PRESENTATION A stunningly realised look at future Paris with beautifully rendered cutscenes.

SOUND Occasional issues with audio synchronisation are more than offset by the dynamic music system.

CONTROLS Simple and intuitive, it occasionally falls over during platforming and some sticky basic navigation.

REPLAY VALUE There is something here for completionists but, beyond that, there's very little to warrant a second play-through.

Verdict

A top-notch narrative and promising combat system makes us yearn for a sequel that goes beyond a collection of good ideas.

7

S-Pressen your buttons

The inclusion of S-Pressens lets you dish out a lot of hurt to get much needed breathing space between you and waves of foes; particularly later in the game. Activating Fury lets you freeflow between enemies with epic damage, D.O.S. stuns enemies and reveals invisible foes, while Camo offers an invisibility-fuelled finishing move. Our two favourites, though, are Logic Bomb – an explosive virus that deals heavy damage at range, and Rest in Peaces – a hack that turns enemy robots against their allies.



"What can I say, I'm just a big hairy winning-machine.
I wake up in the morning and piss excellence"

Grid 2

Livin la vida motor

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: RACING

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO

BANDAI PARTNERS

DEVELOPER:

CODEMASTERS RACING

PLAYERS: 1 - 12

RRP: \$89.95

► PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:

DIRT 3, SHIFT 2

Following through on your vision takes talent, determination and a good chunk of luck. It's a statement that applies both to the creator of the World Series of Racing, or WSR, Patrick Callahan – your in-game boss – and Codemasters'.

Callahan wants WSR to be the mixed martial arts of motorsport. Codemasters want narrative and context in their game to avoid it being a checklist of events.

You've been picked to be the poster child for a new genre of racing. Callahan's idea is to take on and then incorporate the street racers of America, the technical and meticulous guys from Europe and the drift champs of Asia, and mash them together to form the WSR, eventually finding the greatest driver in the world. He provides the cars, you provide the spectacle.

It's not the first time Codies have tried to weave a storyline into their racing games and they seem to

stumble trying to make the concept work. The *Dirt* series fell a bit flat and forced because of it, and life beyond pit lane was ditched altogether for the latest *F1. Grid 2's* story isn't going to win a BAFTA but it's a reasonable idea with so-so execution.

What it boils down to is racing around the world in a variety of cars and in exotic locations, from winding Californian coastal tracks to the streets of Paris and Spain, with traditional circuits and familiar race types in between. The breadth of locations and variety of courses should have other games worried. As the seasons roll on and unfold, so does the variety and layout of tracks within the locations. Sometimes they're repurposed from vanilla races to smoke-churning drift comps, or events where you need to overtake slow moving traffic and chain together points.

A lot of care has been put into the tracks and their surrounding environments. A good percentage of them have day and night versions, and you're forced to hone your reactions as the competition gets harder and faster. One Californian coastal track, with dirt edges that are bordered by shallow cliff faces on one side and

alternating stretches of trees and gaping nothingness on the other, left us palpitating when we were pushing an aging American muscle car through its bends. Two seasons and countless races later it hosts a throbbing Viper with a back end that loves to get loose. That's one miniscule example that will leave you sitting on a knife's edge as the scenery whips by.

What's really innovative is the LiveRoutes system. A LiveRoute event dictates the racetrack on the fly, so you won't know exactly where the next corner will take you. Of course, there's only a finite number of ways it can go, so after a while you'll see how the track is pieced together.

If the tracks set the scene then it's the cars that tell the story, as the EGO driving model is the best it's been. Codemasters have stressed that *Grid 2* has no 'assists' – artificial software tweaks that yank your anchors early or help you turn. There is no green racing line. You're relying on your reactions. It's as pure a racer as they come, and while the cars all hit 100km/h in about four seconds flat they've been honed to feel like you think they should, rather than how they actually do.

Prepared earlier

The LiveRoute system is damned clever, though there's one obvious flaw: the AI knows what's coming up next and always takes the best racing line. You, however, are not Jeff Bridges so you can't see what the CPU sees, and we wish there was a way to see the route you took afterwards. However, LiveRoute races in online multi, against equally clueless mates, is pure comedy. Mind the Arnco.



"Shake and bake! That just happened"

"And now it is time for **the matador to dance with the blind shoe-maker!**" *Accelerates*

There is no green racing line. You're relying on your reactions. **It's as pure a racer as they come**

The new **hubcap cam** was unnecessary

It's all fun and games until **your tyres catch on fire**

Let's try that again

The flashback system, first used in racing games in the first *Grid*, has been tweaked. Instead of being able to play around with the exact point of re-entry, the race starts going backwards and you have to pick where you're going to start up again on the fly. On the upside, it keeps the race going. On the downside, you won't be able to gawp at the destruction of your car in fine detail.



Gone in 19 Seconds, the direct-to-DVD sequel, was short and literally sucked

Grid 2 is a gem of a racer. There's never been any doubt that Codemasters have the skills and resources to make good looking games with world-class handling, and *Grid 2* reinforces that. While its storyline provides reason, the thrilling events are the reason you're here. A fantastic racing game to see out the current generation of consoles, and a genuine must-play. **Paul Taylor**

Final Say

PRESENTATION

Although the framerate takes a hit in the LiveRoutes events and we saw a few instances of screen-tearing, everything else is buttery smooth. A shade away from marvellous.

SOUND

Evocative tyre squeals, great environmental effects and a soundtrack that knows when to shut up and when to highlight the drama. Turn off the race engineer, though.

CONTROLS

We're amazed by how well the feel of the road translates through the DualShock. Stunningly tactile.

REPLAYABILITY

Got the Internet? You're sorted. Even offline-only players will keep pushing and pushing to wring everything they can out of themselves on their favourite tracks. Plus, split-screen!

Verdict

Codemasters doing what they do best with a ballsy, deep and colourful racer. We couldn't have asked for much more.

9



Wait here long enough and the wind has to **blow her skirt up**, right?

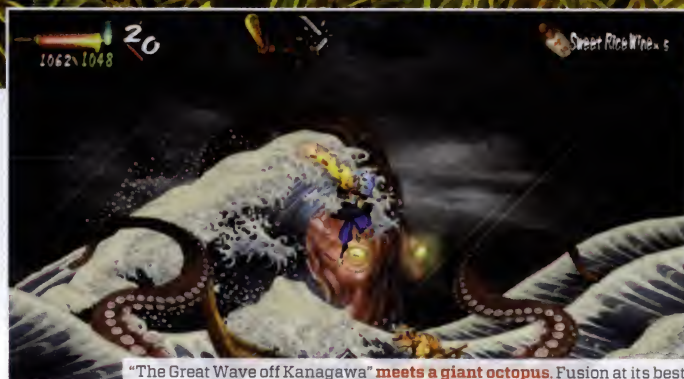
Muramasa Rebirth

Puts the 'ohhhh' in OLED

It's a rare thing for us to sneak a peek at the Wii and enviously eye-bang one of its exclusives, but *Muramasa* led our optics astray. It offered hand-drawn, lusciously-animated 2D visuals, addictive katana-play and RPG elements, and a hot spring bathing scene to rival *Ninja Scroll*. And there ain't nothing sweeter (and sweatier) than a Japanese bubbly bath.

Fortunately, the ninja-powers that be have seen fit to grant us a PS Vita version of this 2007 cult hit. Just like in the original you can retrace the steps of Kisuke – a fugitive ninja who has lost his memory, and Momohime – a lithe princess possessed by a dark spirit. Better yet, *Rebirth* is now the definitive version of *Muramasa*, as it includes four new playable characters (in shorter adventures) and, unlike the Wii version, the job of translation wasn't freelanced out to a rhesus monkey. Finally it all makes sense now and isn't covered in random bits of poo.

Combat is accessible, gravity-defying stuff that will bring a smile to any Japanophile's face. A single attack button system allows you to achieve quite a bit when combined with timing and quick flicks



"The Great Wave off Kanagawa" meets a giant octopus. Fusion at its best

of the stick. Taps unleash satisfying combos of sword flourishes, holding it deflects shurikens and most attacks. Control stick flicks open up a bunch of evasive options like sweeps and rolls, or meteor-style attacks after you jump. Offensive variety meanwhile comes from your special attack button, and which insane 'secret art' it'll unleash is dependant on 108 equippable swords (you can have three at a time).

These weapons are divided into two categories, katana (high speed with weaker hits) and nōdachi (slower with crazy damage). Relying too heavily on your secret arts, or constantly turtle-blocking like a sissy, will diminish your weapon's "Soul Gauge" rendering it about as effective as a feather duster. That, or it'll break outright.

We also appreciate that the game can be tackled in three different styles, Muso (levelling-focused), Shura (pure action), or Shigurui (a survival mode where you're always on one piddly bit of health).

There's something for every play-style here, but even after all this time *Muramasa* hasn't been honed to razor perfection. The backtracking and re-fights are rife, and the plot pacing is a bit flat. Still, *Muramasa* is twenty hours well spent amongst some of the most breathtaking visuals and sound on PS Vita. Unsheathe your wallet and ninjash your way to the store now.

Clint McCreadie

Info

FORMAT: PS VITA

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: TBA

DEVELOPER: VANILLAWARE

PLAYERS: 1

RRP: \$69.95

► **PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:**

NINJAS/SIDE-SCROLLERS



"Fear our ninja techniques and bad scoliosis"

Final Say

PRESENTATION Utterly resplendent visuals. Even the food-eating mini-games ooze charm.

SOUND A mesmerising score and classic katana sounds ripped right out of the Kurosawa classics.

CONTROLS Tight, responsive and perfectly adapted to the PSV layout.

REPLAY VALUE Downloadable extra character scenarios, not much else.

Verdict

Katana-sharp 2D visuals, audio and action. Story's a bit blunt.

8

"Send in the red shirts first?" *Your logic is irrefutable, Captain*

Star Trek: The Video Game

Set your phasers to 'meh'

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO

BANDAI PARTNERS

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL

EXTREMES

PLAYERS: 1 - 2

RRP: \$79.95

► **PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:**
DISAPPOINTMENT
SIMULATORS

When you think of Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock, what do you think of? If the box art is anything to go by, it's two dudes with a steely glare and space weapons so pointy and large they'd make the *Army of Two* blokes squirm in their pants.

Star Trek, as a brand, is a lot of things to a lot of people. To its long-time fans it's about William Shatner looking suave, or Patrick Stewart being incredibly bald, Spock's neck pinch, Klingons, diplomacy, lengthy exposition, a rich history of the galaxy. It probably isn't two blokes clumsily climbing around or ducking behind cover and loosing off a few shots from whatever space guns they've found lying on the ground.

That's what you get in *Star Trek: The Videogame*. It is a facsimile of a hundred other action games that have done what it does many, many times better. As a piece of merchandise it's based on J.J. Abrams' (very entertaining) films which are trying to appeal to the old crowd with clever nods and hook in the new with its glossy showmanship, but as a game it's uninspired.

It's also comically full of glitches, bad transitions from cut scene to



Boldly going forward 'cause we can't find reverse

gameplay and rookie errors. NPCs will spout important plot points facing away from whoever they're talking to. The AI wrestles with what it wants your companion to do (Spock if you're playing as Kirk, or vice-versa, whatever, they're both essentially the same), sending them rocketing down a corridor before they spin on the spot and come back to your position.

An example. We're crouched behind cover while the lizard-like Gorn, an old enemy made new, are firing at us from a few strategically placed points of cover. Spock is trying to wedge in beside Kirk, but he's either too stupid or stubborn to move to our opposite side and instead turns a neat 180 on the spot until we shuffle over and he finally settles. Then he runs headlong into the crossfire.

You could play this with a chum sitting on the same couch, or online, who wouldn't be so stupid. You'd both battle with the infuriating cover system, and mash the joypad in unison when opening stuck doors. Tactics barely come into it when the lasers are flying.

As a game based on a movie, *Star Trek* is ok. This is no rush job but it lacks either the expertise or imagination to make it passable as a game in its own right. And who the hell would bother with that. **Paul Taylor**

Final Say

PRESENTATION 'Doesn't look that great, does it?' said one passer-by. No, it does not.

SOUND Fine voice acting, passable growls from the cannon-fodder Gorn, so-so pew pew effects.

CONTROLS Say, ever played a third-person action game? Let your muscle memory kick in and let your mind go to sleep.

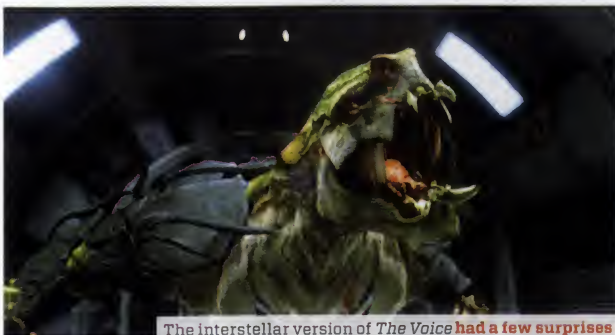
REPLAY VALUE Plough it for trophies over the weekend then send it to the dusty part of the drawer along with *Dark Void* and *Duke Nukem*.

Verdict

Star Trek's been ripped straight from the 'How to Build an Action Game' handbook.

It's as by-the-numbers as they come.

5



The interstellar version of *The Voice* had a few surprises

"U peeved to be **missing sleeve BRO?**"

Soul Sacrifice

If the Ayatollah cannot have it, no one can



The opening ten minutes of *Soul Sacrifice* are so daft that you half expect the two characters involved in the game's first fight to strap on robot helmets and start remixing the soundtrack.

After a rather preposterous introduction, the player finds themselves locked away in a cage with Librom, a Necronomicon-esque demonic talking book, and things don't exactly settle down.

Librom's pages contains the diary entries of a sorcerer that the player customises and controls, one whose journey of monster battling and soul sacrificing makes up the main thrust of the game. Soon enough, a sense of structure starts to unfold from the madness, as the game throws more concepts, mechanics and plot details your way, and after two or so hours – around the time the online multiplayer options unlock – you'll have a pretty good sense of what the game is trying to achieve.

Soul Sacrifice takes the action-RPG template of games like *Monster Hunter* and *Phantasy Star Online*, and breaks it down into smaller chunks, better suited to a handheld. Although there's not as much enemy variety as we'd like, there's plenty

of reason to experiment with different weapon/spell/companion load-outs, and battles can get quite intense. There are too many interesting mechanics to outline here, suffice it to say that some very fascinating risk/reward prospects can emerge on the battlefield.

The game never loses sight of the bigger picture beyond your individual sorties. The 'boss' missions, in particular, have a great sense of importance to them. The entire levelling system is built around choosing to 'save' or 'sacrifice' your enemies after defeating them, with one decision giving you additional life, the other giving you additional power. The boss creatures, which are generally enormous, impressive beasts that take ages to bring down, reveal themselves to be deformed humans upon their defeat, and will beg for their lives. There are benefits and drawbacks to sacrificing or saving souls, and the absence of a black-and-white morality system is welcome (especially when there's a system that lets you sacrifice dying team-mates in the online co-op missions).

All of this is wrapped up wonderfully by a plot that is as obtuse as it is bleak. Things propel forward with twists and reveals that, while ridiculous, work well in the context of the game. Designer Keiji Inafune told the US PlayStation blog that he wanted to make a game that reflected the cruel reality of the sacrifices we must make in our lives, which comes through well in the game's mix of pitch-black nihilism and occasional hints towards the heartfelt human touch at the game's core.

Soul Sacrifice isn't the deepest Action-RPG out there, but it's certainly one of the most interesting, and it feels right at home on PS Vita. **James O'Connor**

Info

FORMAT: PS VITA

GENRE: ACTION-RPG

RELEASE: OUT NOW

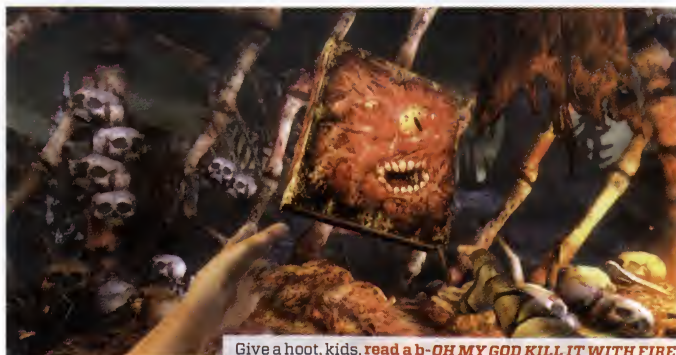
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: MARVELOUS

PLAYERS: 1-4

RRP: \$54.95

► **PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:**
MONSTER HUNTER



Give a hoot, kids, read a b-**OH MY GOD KILL IT WITH FIRE**

Final Say

PRESENTATION There are some bland textures here and there, but the creature designs and animations stand out.

SOUND The soundtrack is suitably creepy and the voice acting is solid throughout.

CONTROLS Lining up shots from a distance can be fiddly and the lock-on mechanic isn't great, but they're mostly fine.

REPLAY VALUE There's a sizeable quest, heaps of side missions, upcoming free DLC and excellent online play – you could play this for ages.

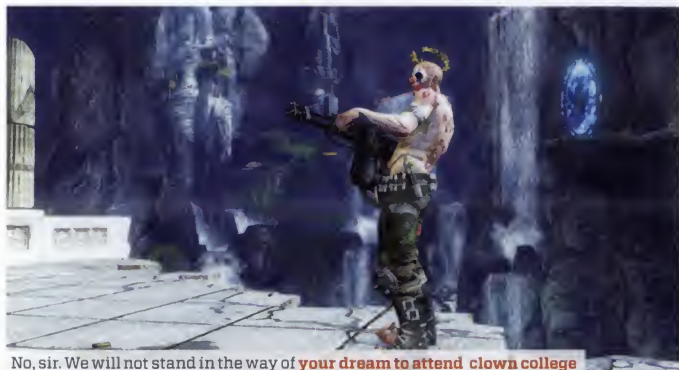
Verdict

Soul Sacrifice slowly unfolds into an addictive and exciting adventure. It's a bit repetitive, but also very engrossing.

8

God Mode

Not-Really-That-Good God



No, sir. We will not stand in the way of **your dream to attend clown college**

Info

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: SHOOTER
RELEASE: OUT NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: ATLUS GAMES
DEVELOPER: SABER INTERACTIVE
PLAYERS: 1-4
RRP: \$11.05

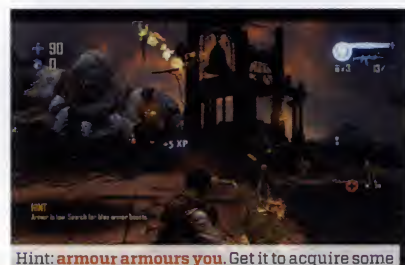
► **PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:**
HORDE MODES

If you're working on a multiplatform online shooter, here's a free tip – make sure that your game actually connects online every time the player boots it up. We had a few issues with *God Mode* on the PS3; it would occasionally refuse to connect to the network, for no reason that we could ascertain. You can run it through a LAN if you so desire, but online co-op is obviously the main attraction (the game is all but unplayable alone) and being denied access has done little for our confidence vis-à-vis this game's long-term prospects.

Once you get it up and running *God Mode* is moderately enjoyable, with some frantic shooting and good looking levels to

run through, but it's enjoyable in the same way a McDonalds cheeseburger is – it's comfortable but junky, lacking most of the things you really want from a game/meal. The gameplay remains the same throughout: you're swarmed with waves of enemies, you shoot them all, and you move onto the next area to do it all again. Repeat over six arenas until you've levelled up enough to buy some of the slightly more interesting weapons.

There are some neat ideas here, like the random modifiers that trigger in each area, and being able to turn on 'oaths' that increase the challenge while rewarding you with extra XP and coins. But these features aren't original, and it's hard for an unoriginal game to hold one's interests after the 500th skeleton has had their head shot off. **James O'Connor**



Hint: **armour armours you**. Get it to acquire some

Final Say

PRESENTATION The minimal exposition is probably a good thing, but damn are those slow texture load-ins ugly.

SOUND A moderately amusing narrator, some forgettable music, and oddly quiet beasts.

CONTROLS All is as you would expect it to be. Characters are responsive without feeling super smooth.

REPLAY VALUE Theoretically quite high, if you want to try Gold difficulty. But we'll never play it again.

Verdict

A solidly constructed co-op game, but also kind of dull and unlovable.

5

Thomas Was Alone

Don't wanna be, alllll byyyy mmmmy-seeeeelllll

Info

FORMAT: PS3, PS VITA
GENRE: PUZZLE/PLATFORMER
RELEASE: OUT NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: MIKE BITHELL
DEVELOPER: CURVE STUDIOS
PLAYERS: 1
RRP: \$11.05

► **PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:**
SOUNDS SHAPES

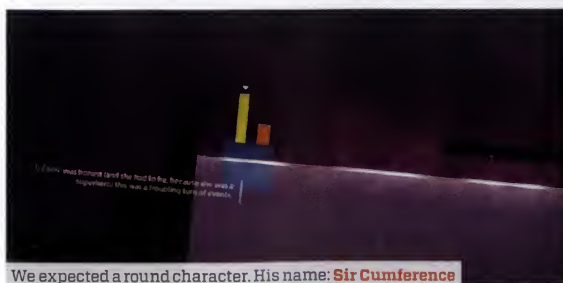
Thomas Was Alone, in which you lead a bunch of anthropomorphised rectangles and squares through 100 different levels, is not a complicated game.

The levels are simple to such an extent that when creator Mike Bithell refers to them as 'puzzles' in the audio commentary (exclusive to the PlayStation iterations of the game), it sounds wrong. The way forward is almost always clear, and it's rare that you'll need to stop and think about any situation for longer than twenty seconds. Each polygon has its own separate attributes and abilities, and much of the game is geared towards teaching you about their differences.

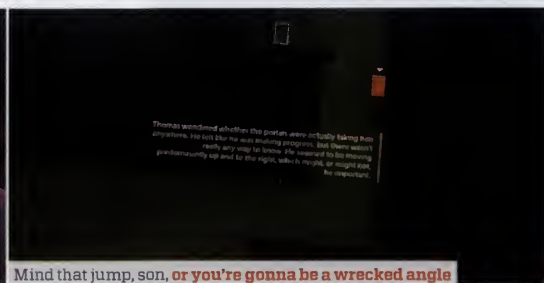
But while figuring out the game's simple jumping and character switching sequences may have grown boring fast in

a less polished game, *Thomas Was Alone* saves itself by overlaying a story. The shapes have personalities – all-rounder Thomas is lonely (natch), the high jumping John is a show-off, little square Chris has a chip on his shoulder that he starts to get over once he falls in love with the super heroine wannabe Claire, and so on. The narrative is *Thomas Was Alone's* Lebowsky rug, tying the whole game together (man), and making it strangely compelling.

The story's carried by the narration of comedian Danny Wallace, and while it's never particularly fascinating in and of itself it's surprising just how much it brings the whole game up. You'll want to see it through and savour the occasional sparks in the level design. **James O'Connor**



We expected a round character. His name: **Sir Cumberface**



Mind that jump, son, **or you're gonna be a wrecked angle**

Final Say

PRESENTATION Simple, clean visuals, cross-play between consoles, and a narrative that gives the whole game a sense of drive.

SOUND Between Danny Wallace's narration, Mike Bithell's audio commentary and the soundtrack, it's an aural class act.

CONTROLS Switching between blocks is fiddly by necessity and the jumping doesn't feel as responsive as it could, but these are minor issues.

REPLAY VALUE Will be a once-and-done thing for most players, but 3 hours for \$11 isn't bad.

Verdict

Thomas Was Alone comes together into something more than the sum of its multiple simplistic parts.

7

This is actually a **much fairer** fight than it looks



Darkstalkers Resurrection

Ye oldschool ghouls

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: FIGHTER

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: CAPCOM

DEVELOPER: IRON

GALAXY

PLAYERS: 1 - 2

RRP: \$21.95

PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:
HOT SUCCUBIACTION

Confession time. *Darkstalkers Resurrection's* release got past us. We missed it, we're playing catch-up. Ordinarily we'd wear that and move on, but the fact is this is too good not to rate.

For those of you unfamiliar with the series, it's basically *Street Fighter II* with freaky monsters from the depths of the Necronomicon. We're also willing to bet you've already seen some of its characters – Felicia and Morrigan, in particular – came in Capcom's other games.

If you are up to speed on the series, you should know that this package is *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge* and *Darkstalkers 3*. Why two? Because Capcom (and its fans) couldn't decide which should receive the HD treatment.

In terms of gameplay, both remain unchanged, retaining the feel and fighter balance of the original arcade versions. Just like their *Street Fighter* cousins, both of these classics hold up remarkably well today. Those who have played *Marvel vs. Capcom* will feel right at home with the high, middle, low punch and kick system, and *Revenge* introduced creature comforts like air blocking, air dashing, and the ability to perform extended chain combos.

Aside from the standard ranked and player matches, *Resurrection* also includes an online tournament mode. The game adds HD filtering with multiple viewing options, YouTube replay uploads, eight-player lobbies and a tutorial mode which provides in-depth tips on the mechanics of the game. Better yet, completing in-game challenges earns you the right to unlock bonus content in a "Vault" that includes (drool-worthy) artwork, videos, and other saucy rewards.

Darkstalkers Resurrection is a well preserved piece of history of which no fighting game fan should be unaware. Go check it out.

Clint McCreadie

Final Say

PRESENTATION A colourful cast of freaks that look and animate great in HD.

SOUND The sound effects are just as wacky as the things that spout them. Not annoyingly so.

CONTROLS Like all Capcom fighters, honed to near perfection. Each character feels very unique.

REPLAY VALUE Online multi code never skips a beat. Lots of extras to keep fighting for.

Verdict

A lovingly produced tribute to a true arse-kicking classic.

8

Zombie Tycoon 2: Brainhov's Revenge

Dead inside

Info

FORMAT: PS3, PS VITA

GENRE: STRATEGY

RELEASE: OUT NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: FRIMA

STUDIO

PLAYERS: 1 - 2

RRP: US\$9.95

PLAY THIS IF YOU LIKE:
COMMAND & CONQUER

Cross-buy, cross-play, cross-save: the three non-words every 'PS3ita' gamer hungers to hear. *Zombie Tycoon 2* has all of these, and that's what it does right. What it does wrong: its solo play is boring, and gets in the way of its rather decent multiplayer action.

Allow us to explain. Multiplayer is an extremely approachable RTS where you send out your zombie minions to assault survivor's houses and turn suburbia into your undead-spawning base of operations. Cultivating, skill-changing and levelling your stinking hordes (and token monster mascot)

is your only hope of prevailins against a human necromancer counterpart.

Solo, beyond the first level, has very little of that fun. It feels like one big tutorial that has a forgettable story wedged in, and bears none of multi's size and scope. To make matters worse, the level designers make you arbitrarily backtrack across large maps with slow-arse zombies. Who thought that was a good idea?

At this point we'd usually recommend you 'play it for the multi', but there's a problem there. Multi has one map and one game mode. After a while even that great experience becomes as mindless and dull as the solo and the subject matter. **Clint McCreadie**



It's not a "blatant rip-off" of Slimer; it's a "loving homage"

Final Say

PRESENTATION Don't expect your eyeballs to be sucked out of your head. Cartoony, competent, and keeps track of the action. No thrills all the way.

SOUND The comical snarls of an all-out zombie rush are always amusing.

CONTROLS The biggest surprise of the package. Monster powers on the d-pad, and units easily controlled on the face buttons. Smooth.

REPLAY VALUE Short solo and the multiplayer has very limited options. 30+ trophies including a Platinum.

Verdict

Fun's about as short-lived as your human prey.

5

220 Triathlon AUSTRALIA/NZ

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▶ WHAT'S NEW

PSN DEVELOPMENTS

What you can expect to see and play on the PSN

How much did you love *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*? If you're like us, you cherished it more than that Cabbage Patch Doll you foolishly planted in the backyard in hopes of creating a freakishly-cute doll army.

Well then, get ready to squeal because the potential for a sequel is beginning to look very good! During a podcast interview, superstar Michael Biehn claimed that the downloadable gem exceeded Ubisoft's expectations by FIVE times. According to the actor, that led to the game's Creative Director, Dean Evans, calling him excitedly,

"Dean was with me on the phone last night. He was pretty jacked up. He was going into a meeting today, to you know... I think he wants to turn it into some sort of franchise. He's got a sequel in mind," said Biehn.

Elsewhere in the land of PSN, Sony has revealed an all new game for both PS3 and PSVita – *CounterSpy*. Revolving around an organisation called C.O.U.N.T.E.R., the game will take place during the Cold War as two opposing super powers are embroiled in a frantic Arms Race that threatens the existence of humanity. In an unexpected move, however, you won't be working for either side, but rather attempting to sabotage both superpowers' plans so that the planet's destruction never occurs.



Sergeant Rex Power Colt: part man, part machine, all American

It's brought to you by developer Dynamighty, a 10-person team founded by ex-LucasArts and Pixar employees. It's their first game, but there's certainly an excellent pedigree behind them.

From what we know it will play out as a side-scroller, akin to *Flashback*, *Out of This World* and *Guacamelee!* (without the funny hats), but as Dynamighty's David Nottingham notes, "we're inspired to deliver something that brings our own voice to this genre."

Finally, you can now use PayPal to add extra funds to your PlayStation Wallet! A user-requested feature for quite some time, its presence should hopefully encourage more gamers to get onto the Store thanks to the bonus layer of protection. That's a win, guys.



VIDZONE PLAYLIST SPOTLIGHT

THIS MONTH: VIP Zone Imagine Dragons



MGMT - KIDS

Insanely creepy monsters, a bunch of dudes in tight silver outfits and... trees? No, you haven't ingested the wrong kind of cookie, this one's just six minutes of crazy.



IMOGEN HEAP - FIRST TRAIN HOME

With a very classic '80s vibe, there's a lot of grey and even more running. It's still a pretty catchy song, though.



BECK - LOST CAUSE

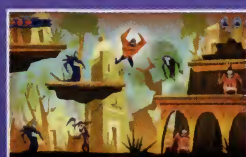
When you need a break, most people will suggest having a Kit Kat. We, on the other hand, think some Beck will do the trick. There's floating heads and everything!

VidZone is the largest online music video VOD service in the world, and it's available **free** on PS3. Download the vidzone application and you'll have access to over 30,000 music videos at the push of a button!



PlayStation®Network

ESSENTIAL DOWNLOADS



GUACAMELEE!

Better than a plate-full of tasty, tasty nachos, this side-scrolling gem will put your platforming skills to the test. You owe it to yourself to set down the corn chips and add it to your collection.



THE WALKING DEAD - SEASON PASS

TellTale's epic five-chapter series is finally on the Aussie PSN, and you can grab them all for just under 30 bucks. It is amazing. Stop reading and go play it. Seriously, go!



FAR CRY 3 BLOOD DRAGON

A nostalgic ride through the wonderfully unique '80s, *Blood Dragon* provides a wealth of content for a tiny price. If you *don't* grab it, we can't be friends anymore.



STAR WARS PINBALL

This first load of tables are free, and if you're a fan of *Zen Pinball* (the platform on which it's based) you'll love this. Other tables from the *Star Wars* universe should be keenly priced in the future.



FUSE DEMO

What happens when humans gain access to powerful alien technology they were never meant to have? Bad things, that's what. Test out the latest co-op shooter begging for your cash dollars.

WHAT IS PSN?

The PlayStation Network (PSN) is free to join and free to play. No subscription is required to play online. You'll be able to communicate with friends, access the PlayStation Store and download demos, add-ons, trailers, PSN games, PSone classics and blockbuster movies!



PlayStation®Network

TROPHY LIVES

You love games so much you may as well be hitched to them. Here's what you did to get your beloved trophies.



Mark Fusu Hunt

Game: *Need for Speed: Most Wanted*



Trophy: Platinum

Took 170 hours and a near-miss divorce.



Joshua Pahlke

Game: *InFAMOUS 2*



Trophy: Platinum

Running around like a madman trying to find all the blast-shards. Nice.



Joel Phillips

Game: *Dragon's Dogma*

Trophy: Queen's Regalia

I channelled my inner woman after dressing a gentleman in women's clothes.



GENRE: ACTION-ADVENTURE **RELEASE:** NOW **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT MONTREAL **PLAYERS:** 1 **RRP:** \$15.95

DLC > Assassin's Creed III – The Tyranny of King Washington: The Redemption

Connor 'bears' all

If you've been following George Washington's escapades you'd have heard the man has succumbed to one of the oldest sayings in the book. "With great power comes a giant orb-flinging magic staff... and pyramids."

Yep, the egocentric son-of-a-bitch is building an ancient Egyptian structure as a testament to his Apple-of-Eden granted power. Your job as always is to assassinate a whole bunch of men wearing blue coats and then morally scathe the king after facing him in combat.

Narratively speaking this third piece of DLC is stronger than the first two parts, adding story closure and a subtle nod to the next entry

in the series – *Assassins Creed IV: Black Flag* (look for it during the ship battle scene).

Gameplay-wise over the two-and-a-half-hour stint you'll be avoiding water mines as your vessel navigates heavy winds, ramming your enemies behind with your wood...en ship, causing civil unrest among the people and toppling stone towers with the might of a hairy bear.

That's right, the third power to grace Connor's skill-set via a crazy concoction of homemade drugs is the power of the hibernetic beast. When activated he leaps into the air while a transparent bear apparates behind him, then slams back onto

the ground sending a shockwave of destruction outwards. As awesome as this sounds it's actually beary lame (yes, that lame), lacking both the gameplay depth and variety offered by the wolf cloak and eagle flight.

Now with all three DLCs in hand is it worth the \$45 price tag? Not really, but here's a pro tip – pick up this final DLC and you'll net yourself all three powers for a third of the price. You can thank us later. **♣ Martin Gladstone**

VERDICT

Provides story closure but is expensive and quickly forgotten. Easily missed.



PlayStation®Network

BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE



CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS II

DEVELOPER: TREYARCH / INFINITY WARD **PLAYERS:** 1 - 16
This year's game is a revolution, ditching old conventions as well as lowering the entry barrier to competitive multiplayer. It's never been so good, and Zombies is also a fine diversion.



DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS **PLAYERS:** 2 - 8
Excellent. You'll spend most of your time playing Tag and Trailblazer, and while it sounds slim it's indescribably addictive. Believe us when we say it's worth it just for this alone.



JOURNEY

DEVELOPER: THATGAMECOMPANY **PLAYERS:** 1 - 2
Alright, so it's limited but you've never played a game like this online. You'll be amazed by the level of cooperation you'll share with your fellow travellers, and it'll remind you that benevolence resides in the heart of strangers.



FIFA 13

DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS **PLAYERS:** 1 - 22
Football Club is just one reason to get on board here, where real life and your digital career mesh seamlessly into one. As usual, the beautiful game is remarkably brilliant with 11 versus 11 matches. Get on it right now.



BATTLEFIELD 3

DEVELOPER: DICE **PLAYERS:** 1 - 24
You'll be won over by the chaotic destruction of storming in to an enemy base on the back of a quad bike. You'll stay for the tactics. Team matches have little room for lone wolves, so play friendly or don't play at all.

► BREAKING DOWN UBISOFT'S NOSTALGIC CLASSIC

Far Cry 3 Blood Dragon Easter Eggs

Boot up *Far Cry 3 Blood Dragon* and you'll be flooded with '80s pop-culture nods. To help you out, we've listed our favourites.

SPOILER WARNING: If you haven't played *Far Cry 3 Blood Dragon*, don't read these two pages...



▲ Stay Frosty

Michael Connell Biehn. Not only is that name synonymous with the iconic Sgt. Kyle Reese in the original *Terminator* and Corporal Dwayne Hicks in *Aliens*, but he's also the voice actor behind Sergeant Rex Colt. Seriously, is there anything the guy can't do? Answer: no.

▼ We're gonna need a montage

Any classic '80s movie has an obligatory montage, so it's only natural for *Blood Dragon* to spoof to master: *Rocky*. Right before the game's final chapters you'll be treated to a cutscene that takes more than a few cues from Ivan Drago's intense training regime in *Rocky IV*.



▲ Turtle Power

One of *Blood Dragon*'s more hidden references is also one of its best, taking a jab at the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. During a Predator mission, Rex must locate and kill four turtles deep within the sewers. You can find a pizza box as well as each of the four turtles wearing colored ninja masks. No word on any cane-wielding Ninja rats, though.

Synth-tastic One of *Blood Dragon*'s best elements is its analogue-synth heavy, nostalgia-filled soundtrack that is itself a throwback to nearly every cheesy '80s action film ever. The track WarZone, for example, is a pretty much a pitch-perfect tribute to Brad Fiedel's *Terminator* theme. Done by Aussie electronic artist Power Glove, the entire OST is available to buy on iTunes, and will make you want to boogie woogie.

▼ Welcome to the party, pal

Complete the helicopter entry scene and you'll be treated to a bronze trophy named after a famous line uttered by John McClane in the original *Die Hard* film.



▼ Dillon, you son of a bitch:

Combine two stupidly buff men with one epic handshake and you have a timeless *Predator* reference bound to go down in history.



An arrow to the knee... Make sure you check out every fallen soldier on the battlefield, because if you're lucky, you might just locate a cyber skeleton with an arrow conveniently in his knee. Okay, so it might not be an '80s reference, but we still appreciate the effort.

▼ I am your father

The holy grail of references and the most instantaneously recognisable of the bunch, reach *Blood Dragon's* ridiculous conclusion and not only you will be treated to a brief nod to one of *RoboCop's* final scenes, but the revelation that your nemesis, Sloane, is actually your father right after. Well played, Ubisoft. Well played.



Burn baby, burn

One of *Blood Dragon's* final missions sees you tasked with destroying a whole lot of dragon eggs courtesy of a devastating flamethrower. In the sci-fi classic, *Aliens*, action heroine Ellen Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) becomes

cornered in an egg chamber where she threatens to destroy the Queen's eggs with a flamethrower if the surrounding guards do not stand down. The Queen, realising this, complies, but as Ripley backs away, she burns them all anyway. Nobody puts Baby in a corner.



▲ Running Man

Another Trophy, this time popping up after you high-tail it away from a dangerous blood dragon. *The Running Man* was an Arnie film about a television show where convicted criminal ("runners") must escape death at the hands of professional killers.

▼ Part man, part machine

While you'll immediately see Rex's glowing red eye as a *Terminator* gag, it's actually closer to Jean-Claude Van Damme's turn in *Universal Soldier*. After all Van Damme played a reanimated Vietnam veteran and Rex died in Vietnam.



Blood Dragons...

Despite being called dragons throughout the entirety of the game, the title character will inevitably make you think of the fear-inducing T-Rex from Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* – just with the added bonus of shooting lasers from its eyes. If you don't believe us, the only way to escape the blood dragon's clutches is to move away very slowly because they can't see all that well. You'll feel like Sam Neil is right beside you, whispering "don't move! He can't see us if we don't move" right into your ear holes.

Weapons of mass destruction



▲ Your trusty 'Kobracon' sniper rifle is actually a mash up of both Cobra Commander (from *G.I. Joe*) and the Decepticons (of *Transformers* fame), both of which were gigantic Hasbro Toys licences in the '80s and '90s.



▲ The Galleria 1991 (aka: the shotgun) is oozing with *Terminator 2* references. Fist off, 1991 is the year that the James Cameron classic was released. Galleria also happens to be the name of the film's mall.



▲ Moving on, we have the Fazertron, a name that sounds strikingly similar to Lasertron – the company that popularised the pursuit of Laser tag in the '80s in the United States.



▲ Your A.J.M.9 pistol just so happens to share the same initials of *RoboCop* (Alex J. Murphy), who is another man reborn into a machine.

► MUST WATCH

The Hobbit - An Unexpected Journey (M)

DIRECTOR: PETER JACKSON **STARRING:** IAN MCKELLEN, MARTIN FREEMAN, RICHARD ARMITAGE, IAN HOLM, ANDY SERKIS, HUGO WEAVING, CATE BLANCHETT, CHRISTOPHER LEE, ELIJAH WOOD **AVAILABLE ON** BLU-RAY/DVD

After centuries of prosperity, the proud and great Dwarven home of Lonely Mountain has been lost. Its vast wealth attracted the attention of a malevolent fire-breathing dragon, Smaug, who attacked, sacked and laid claim to the city. Decades later a company of Dwarves led by Thorin Oakenshield (Armitage) looks to reclaim their ancestral home, but they're going to need some help – hence Gandalf the Grey's (McKellen) inclusion.

But the more unlikely candidate is Bilbo Baggins (Freeman), a hobbit who proves heroes can come in all shapes and sizes. Many *LoTR* alumni swing by in extended cameos and Andy Serkis returns with another powerhouse performance as the tortured soul Gollum.

Watch this if you like *The Lord of the Rings*

Verdict Cutting edge visuals bring life to one of the world's most loved prequels.

9

“Bilbo Baggins proves heroes come in all shapes and sizes”



Life of Pi (PG)

DIRECTOR: ANG LEE **CAST:** SURAJ SHARMA, IRRFAN KHAN, TABU, GERARD DEPARDIEU **AVAILABLE:** (RENT/OWN) \$6.99/\$32.99 6025MB (HD), \$5.99/\$24.99 1588MB (SD)

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, *Life of Pi* tells the tale of an Indian boy Pi (Sharma) after a cataclysmic shipwreck finds him stranded on a lifeboat in the middle of the ocean, with a ferocious and incredibly hungry Bengal tiger as his only companion.

What follows is a visual masterpiece and unquestionably one of the best films of last year. Performances will emotionally drain you, while

the spectacle of Ang Lee's direction will have you enthralled right until the very personal, spiritual and thought-provoking final moments.

Verdict Exceptionally involving and visually stunning, this is one life story you won't soon forget.

9

PlayStation®Store

► TOP TEN Movies on Demand



- 1 **Skyfall** MGM
- 2 **Argo** Warner Bros.
- 3 **Pitch Perfect** Universal Pictures
- 4 **Red Dawn** Roadshow Films
- 5 **Here Comes the Boom** Sony Pictures
- 6 **The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2** Sony Pictures
- 7 **Dredd** Icon Films
- 8 **Seven Psychopaths** Hopscotch/Entertainment One
- 9 **Taken 2** 20th Century Fox
- 10 **Nitro Circus: The Movie** Universal Pictures

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The PlayStation Network Video Store offers hundreds of titles available to rent or own at the click of a button!



Jurassic Park 3D (M)

DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG **STARRING:** SAM NEILL, LAURA DERN, JEFF GOLDBLUM, RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH, SAMUEL L. JACKSON, WAYNE KNIGHT
AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY/DVD

Just on twenty years ago Steven Spielberg blew a generation's minds with *Jurassic Park*. It appealed to the kid in us all. Who wouldn't want to frolic around a game preserve with dinosaurs? Then human frailty, pride, hubris and greed set in and it became a frighteningly different ball game. *Jurassic Park's* story and execution still holds up wonderfully. Jeff Goldblum's open shirt is still resplendent. Sam Jackson is well, Sam Jackson and the dinosaurs are still scary. Still. The combination of animatronics and CG effects endures the test of time and truly looks magnificent. Much like the ill-fated theme park, they've "spared no expense" for this 3D conversion.

Watch this if you like... *King Kong*

Verdict Stellar and subtle conversion of an absolute classic. It holds up remarkably well.

9



Doctor Who - Season 7 Part 2 (PG-13)

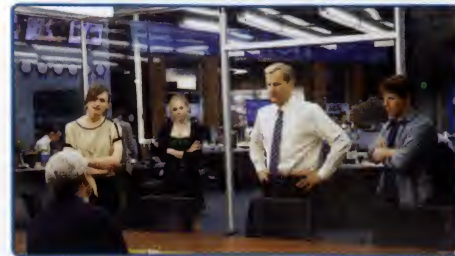
DIRECTOR: VARIOUS **STARRING:** MATT SMITH, JENNA-LOUISE COLEMAN **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY/DVD

After the stunning departure of the Ponds, The Doctor (Smith) has taken a holy sabbatical of sorts. When a virus unlike anything the world has even seen starts broadcasting via WiFi, he finds himself drawn back to modern day London. Crossing paths with another incarnation of Clara Oswald (Coleman) again, in yet another time period he entreats her to join him. Clara is a puzzle he just can't solve and he finds it intoxicating, setting up a great season climax. The chemistry between Coleman and Smith is magnetic, even more so than with previous companion Karen Gillan. Top notch stories, production and guest stars make this a stellar season all round.

Watch this if you like... *Warehouse 13*

Verdict The series isn't slowing down in the slightest and Coleman may be the best companion to date.

8



The Newsroom - Season 1 (M)

DIRECTOR: VARIOUS **STARRING:** JEFF DANIELS, EMILY MORTIMER, JOHN GALLAGHER JR., ALSTON ILL, THOMAS SAOSKI, DEV PATEL, OLIVIA MUNN, SAM WATERSTON **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY/DVD

Another brilliant offering from creator Aaron Sorkin, whose hits include *The West Wing*, *The Social Network* and *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*. Now he sets his sights on Pay-Per-News networks in this self-reflective series focusing on pivotal real news events. Veteran News Night anchor Will McAvoy (Daniels) is at the top of his profession yet finds his work unsatisfying. A moment of clarity drives him to spill his honest thoughts on what is wrong with America and causes him to question how he delivers the news. The show takes bold steps questioning the nature of reporting, and the sway corporations have on the news.

Watch this if you like... *The Hour*

Verdict Honest, unrelenting and heartfelt at times *The Newsroom* is tremendously addictive and thought-provoking.

9



G.I. Joe: Renegades - Complete Collection (PG)

DIRECTOR: NATHAN CHEW, SCOTT BERN, KEVIN ALTIERI, SCOOTER TIDWELL, PATRICK ARCHIBALD
CAST: JOHN MARSDEN, NATALIA CIGLIUTI, KEVIN MICHAEL RICHARDSON, MATTHEW YANG KING, CHARLIE ADLER, CLANCY BROWN **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

Re-booted, re-designed, and re-imagined, *Renegades* sees the core member of the G.I. Joe team re-cast as the A-Team; accused of a crime they didn't commit, on the run from both the military police and the diabolical corporate goons of Cobra. One of the more entertaining American cartoons of recent years, it upgrades a Cold War dinosaur for the era of social networks and Frankenfoods, while retaining the core appeal for the franchise: loyalty. About as good as a series of 26 half-hour toy ads can get.

Watch this if you like: *TMNT*, *Thundercats*

Verdict We'd like you to know that this is one of the best cartoon reboots we've ever seen. And knowing is half the battle.

8



Rurouni Kenshin - New Kyoto Arc (MA15+)

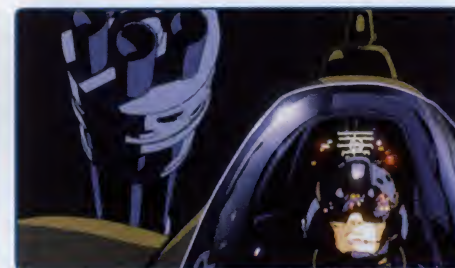
DIRECTOR: KAZUHIRO FURUHASHI **CAST:** MAYO SUZUKAZE, KANAKO IRIE, KEN NARITA, MASAOKI ISHIKAWA, MASANORI IKEDA, TOMO SAKURAI
AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY, DVD

This mini-series is an attempt to compress a sprawling 35-episode arc from the original TV series into a compact feature-length presentation. Predictably, the story structure and characterisation suffer. Cast members are introduced at a breakneck pace, often getting a few lines before being cut down in sword battles that serve as crude metaphors for humanity's intractable communication problems. The early 90s designs look dated as hell, the animation shortcuts are widespread and the story is incomprehensible.

Watch this if you like: *Samurai X*

Verdict A confused re-telling of an anime classic. The recent live action film is vastly superior.

6



Patlabor - The Mobile Police OVA Series 1: The Early Days (PG)

DIRECTOR: MAMORU OSHII, NAOYUKI YOSHINAGA
CAST: MIINA TOMINAGA, TOSHIO FURUKAWA, RYUNOSUKE OHBAYASHI, MICHIO IKEMIZU
AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY, DVD

25-years-old this year, the original *Patlabor* straight-to-video series is another example of an anime anachronism, but it carries its age well thanks to its superb characterisation and unique creative vision. Back in the 80s, Mamoru 'Ghost in the Shell' Oshii and his crew concocted a plausible near-future world where giant robots had become commonplace in industry, construction, etc. Yet while tech has advanced, human nature remains the same.

Watch this if you like: *Macross*, *Future War 198X*

Verdict A landmark and still a top sci-fi yarn. For long-suffering *Patlabor* fans, the wait is over.

8

▶ MUST SEE

Star Trek Into Darkness (M)

DIRECTOR: J.J. ABRAMS **STARRING:** CHRIS PINE, ZACHARY QUINTO, BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH, ZOE SALDANA, KARL URBAN, SIMON PEGG, ANTON YELCHIN, JOHN CHO, ALICE EVER, BRUCE GREENWOOD, PETER WELLER **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

After besting an insane Romulan out for revenge and using the old alternate timeline clause to take care of any pesky continuity issues Jim 'don't call me James T' Kirk (Pine) and Spock (Quinto) are back to boldly go where *Star Trek* has gone before – enter the wrath of some random territory as the crew of the USS Enterprise face possibly their greatest threat yet, and it comes from within.

When one of Starfleet's most accomplished operatives, Khan, goes rogue, he virtually wipes out all key members of Starfleet's hierarchy leaving Kirk to set a different course outside the boundaries of the prime directive, revenge. Outmatched, outclassed and outgunned can Kirk survive this vicious and calculating adversary?

Benedict Cumberbatch (star of *Sherlock*) is magnificent as Khan, bringing the towering intellect, confidence and superiority of one of *Star Trek*'s best known villains to life and steals virtually every scene he's in. While the action is unrelenting from go to whoa, there's a healthy dose of heart to keep the narrative grounded.

Watch this if you like *Star Trek*, Benedict Cumberbatch



Iron Man 3 (M)

DIRECTORS: SHANE BLACK **STARRING:** ROBERT DOWNEY JR., GWYNETH PALTROW, DON CHEADLE, BEN KINGSLEY, GUY PEARCE, JOHN FAVREAU, PAUL BETTANY **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

After the tumultuous events at the conclusion of *The Avengers*, Tony Stark (Downey Jr.) finds himself a haunted man. Plagued by nightmares, he can't sleep and it's taking its toll on his ability to function as Iron Man. When a vicious terrorist, The Mandarin (Kingsley), targets the United States, Stark will have to confront and conquer his demons if he and the nation under his protection are going to pull through.

While comic book sticklers may take umbrage to the treatment of The Mandarin, writer/director Shane Black's script keeps

you guessing – the pacing is beautiful and the visual 'wow' factor is stunning. His trademark action set pieces, melancholy moments and dark black comedy all translate from the comic book to the movie blockbuster beautifully.

There's great vulnerability to Downey Jr.'s portrayal of Tony Stark and the cracks in his armour make him far more relatable and believable. Don Cheadle is fantastic in support as The Iron Patriot and James Rhodes and Shane Black even manage to make Gwyneth Paltrow as likeable as Pepper Potts. Suit up and enjoy the ride.



Olympus Has Fallen (MA15+)

DIRECTOR: ANTOINE FUQUA **STARRING:** GERARD BUTLER, AARON ECKHART, MORGAN FREEMAN, DYLAN MCDERMOTT, RICK YUNE, ANGELA BASSETT **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

It's pretty hard not to laugh at the premise alone – after a seemingly innocent meeting hits FUBAR territory the President of the United States (Eckhart) is taken hostage in the Oval Office. North Korea, now the new foil against truth and justice, takes on antagonist duties replacing the out-of-fashion Muslim extremists and Cold War Russkies. With the Secret Service all but wiped out in a spectacularly grizzly fashion, one man, disgraced agent Mike Banning (Butler), can save the free world from catastrophe.

Gerard Butler does his best John McClane impersonation as he mops up the bad guys one by one, dropping quips every chance he gets and dispatching each threat to national security with extreme prejudice. Director Antoine Fuqua is having the time of his life and completely embraces the ludicrous nature of it all. Brutally violent, laugh out loud funny and one-hundred percent unapologetic.

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A road less travelled

Tomo: Is cycling the new golf?

3 Peaks Challenge
Surviving the Victorian Alps

Epic Norway
Ride the Atlantic Road



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Release Schedule

Release dates, pre-order deals, new information and much more

OUT NOW

Fast and Furious

Genre: Racing Distributor: Activision

Metro: Last Light

Genre: Shooter Distributor: AIE

Star Trek

Genre: Action Distributor: Namco



Resident Evil Revelations HD

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: AIE

Diggs Nightcrawler

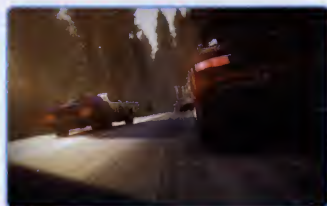
Genre: Adventure Distributor: Sony

Mortal Kombat Komplete Edition

Genre: Fighting Distributor: Warner Bros.

Fuse

Genre: Shooter Distributor: EA



Grid 2

Genre: Racing Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

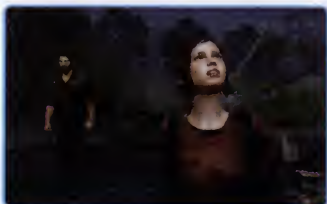
JUNE 2013

Remember Me

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: AIE Date: June 6

Moto GP 13

Genre: Racing Distributor: AIE Date: June 7



PRE-ORDER The Last of Us

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: Sony Date: June 14

► COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag

The year is 1715. Pirates rule the Caribbean and have established their own lawless Republic where corruption, greed and cruelty are commonplace.

Among these outlaws is a brash young captain named Edward Kenway. His fight for glory has earned him the respect of legends such as Blackbeard, but also drawn him into the ancient war between Assassins and Templars, a war that may destroy

everything the pirates have built.

Welcome to the Golden Age of Piracy. Welcome to Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag.

The Skull Edition Includes:

- Jumbo Steel Book
- A high quality artbook including artworks that inspired the game
- The Official Game Soundtrack
- Two lithographs in a protective envelope



EB Games \$98 Estimated dispatch date: 31/10/13

Ashes Cricket 2013

Genre: Sport
Distributor: AIE Date: June 21

Disney Infinity

Genre: Adventure
Distributor: Disney Date: Aug 20

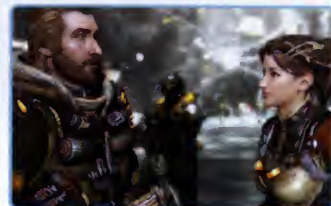
Splinter Cell Blacklist

Genre: Action Distributor: Ubisoft Date: Aug 22



Deadpool

Genre: Action Distributor: Activision Date: June 26



Lost Planet 3

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: AIE Date: Aug 30

One Piece: Pirate Warriors 2

Genre: Action Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners Date: Aug 30

SEPTEMBER 2013

Young Justice: Legacy

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: AIE Date: TBA Sept

Grand Theft Auto V

Genre: Action Distributor: Rockstar Date: Sept 17

Rayman Legends

Genre: Platformer
Distributor: Ubisoft Date: TBA Sept

Dynasty Warriors 8

Genre: RPG Distributor: Mindscape Date: July 12



AUGUST 2013

Tales of Xillia

Genre: RPG Distributor: TBA Date: Aug 9



► PRE-ORDER

Splinter Cell Blacklist

When the US becomes a target and the clock is ticking, it's down to one man to save the lives of millions.

The United States Military has troops stationed in over 150 countries worldwide. For a group of rogue states, this is unacceptable and a terrifying ultimatum is issued called The Blacklist: a deadly countdown of terror attacks against key US interests.

With no end in sight and no plan of action, the US government must call on one of its most potent weapons to help – Sam Fisher.

Pre-order now to receive The 5th Freedom Edition, which includes the following bonuses:

- Sam Fisher figurine (24cm tall)
- 98-page graphic novel
- Collector Box
- Single player and co-op maps
- Steel Book
- 5 gear pieces
- 5 suits
- 5 weapons

EB Games \$118 Estimated dispatch date: 22/8/13

OCTOBER 2013

Beyond: Two Souls

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Sony
Date: Oct 8 2013

Batman: Arkham Origins

Genre: Adventure **Distributor:** Warner Bros. **Date:** Oct 25



Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Ubisoft
Date: Oct 31

TBA 2013

The Last Guardian

Genre: Adventure **Distributor:** Sony
Date: TBA 2013

Dust 514

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** TBA
Date: TBA 2013

Doom 4

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** TBC
Date: TBA 2013

Final Fantasy X/X-2 HD Remaster

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners
Date: TBA 2013



Destiny

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Activision **Date:** TBA 2013

Dragonball Z Budokai HD Collection

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBA 2013

Prey 2

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** AIE
Date: TBA 2013

Watch_Dogs

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Ubisoft
Date: TBA 2013

Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 Remix

Genre: RPG
Distributor: Namco Bandi Partners
Date: TBA 2013

Agent

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Rockstar
Date: TBA 2013

Dragon's Crown

Genre: Action **Distributor:** TBA
Date: TBA 2013



FIFA 14

Genre: Sport **Distributor:** EA **Date:** TBA 2013

Final Fantasy Versus XIII

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBA 2013

Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners
Date: TBA 2013



Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2

Genre: Action-Adventure **Distributor:** Mindscape **Date:** TBA 2013

Rainbow Six: Patriots

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Ubisoft
Date: TBA 2013

Devil's Third

Genre: Action **Distributor:** TBA
Date: TBA 2013

Warrior's Lair

Genre: Action-RPG **Distributor:** TBA
Date: TBA 2013

Dark Souls II

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBA 2013

Diablo III

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Blizzard Entertainment **Date:** TBA 2013

Final Fantasy XIV Online

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBA 2013



LEGO Marvel Super Heroes

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Warner Bros. **Date:** TBA 2013

Brothers in Arms: Furious 4

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Ubisoft
Date: TBA 2013

Until Dawn

Genre: Adventure **Distributor:** Sony
Date: TBA 2013

Battlefield 4

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** EA **Date:** TBA 2013

PS Vita Releases

PSVITA
PlayStation Vita

OUT NOW

Sly Cooper: Thieves in Time

Genre: Platformer **Distributor:** Sony

Guacamelee!

Genre: Platformer **Distributor:** Sony

Switch Galaxy

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Atomicon

Soul Sacrifice

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Sony



Castlevania Mirror of Fate

Genre: Action-Adventure
Distributor: Konami **Date:** TBA 2013

Zone of the Enders HD Collection

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Mindscape **Date:** TBA 2013

Rugby Challenge

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** TBA
Date: TBA 2013

Jak and Daxter Trilogy

Genre: Adventure **Distributor:** Sony
Date: TBA 2013

Tearaway

Genre: Platformer **Distributor:** Sony
Date: TBA 2013

Dragon's Crown

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBA 2013

Final Fantasy X HD Remaster

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners
Date: TBA 2013

SPECIAL EDITION

Watch_Dogs

In today's hyper-connected world, Chicago has the country's most advanced computer system – one which controls almost every piece of city technology. You play as Aiden Pearce, a brilliant hacker but also a former thug, whose criminal past lead to a violent family tragedy. Now on the hunt for those who hurt your family, you'll be able to monitor and hack all who surround you while manipulating the city's systems to stop traffic lights, turn off the electrical grid and more. Use the city of Chicago as your ultimate weapon and conduct your own style of revenge.

The DedSec_Edition Includes:

- 23cm Aiden Pearce Figurine
- Watch_Dogs Artbook
- Watch_Dogs map of Chicago
- Original soundtrack of the game
- Set of 3 exclusive badges
- 3 bonus single-player missions



EB Games \$178 (placeholder price) Estimated dispatch date: 21/11/13



index

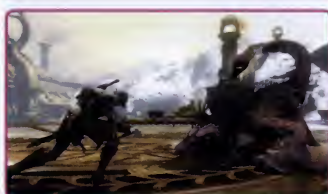
ABOUT THE INDEX

Check out our handy index of all the PS3 and PSV titles we feel you should play (and some you shouldn't). Please note: scores are a reflection of a game's comparative quality at the time of release and will not change - but the index may be updated as titles age or are superseded by new games.

ACTION

- Alien Breed 3: Descent** 7
TEAM 17
Top-down twin-stick affair that doesn't do enough to improve upon its predecessors.
- Army of Two: The 40th Day** 7
EA MONTREAL
Still bone-headed, but way better in co-op.
- Asura's Wrath** 4
CYBERCONNECT 2
There's not much game here and it's packed with QTEs. Bleh.
- RECOMMENDED Bayonetta** 9
PLATINUM GAMES
It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy and weird.
- RECOMMENDED Beyond Good & Evil HD** 8
UBISOFT
Still one of the most charming games ever.
- Big Sky Infinity** 6
BOSS BADDIE
A poorly thought-out twin-stick shooter. Looks alright, plays better on PS Vita.
- Binary Domain** 7
YAKUZA STUDIO
Cool ideas, embarrassing dialogue.
- RECOMMENDED BloodRayne: Betrayal** 8
WAYFORWARD
A classy and colourful beat-'em-up that rewards exploration.
- BreakQuest: Extra Evolution** 5
BEATSHAPES
Tries to break the brick-breaking formula but suffers from plodding gameplay.
- RECOMMENDED Castle Crashers** 8
THE BEHEMOTH
Violent but classy side-scrolling cartoon RPG-action. Best played in co-op.
- RECOMMENDED Child of Eden** 8
Q ENTERTAINMENT
You need a Move controller to wring the best out of this weird and wonderful blaster.
- The Club** 8
BIZARRECREATIONS
Original, compulsive and fun.
- RECOMMENDED Dead Rising 2: Off The Record** 9
CAPCOM VANCOUVER
If you missed it first time around, grab it now.
- Defiance** 7
TRION WORLDS
Slow and shabby but can still ruin your life.
- Devil May Cry HD Collection** 6
CAPCOM
A bit lazy. 720p gameplay, low-res cutscenes.
- RECOMMENDED DmC: Devil May Cry** 8
NINJA THEORY
Makes the original seem cringeworthy by comparison. Remarkable and frantic.
- RECOMMENDED Double Dragon Neon** 6
WAYFORWARD
Scott Pilgrim does it better.
- NEW Dynasty Warriors 7 Empires** 5
TECMO KOEI
Mindless hack n' slash with a dash of strategy. Shallower than a piss puddle.
- Earth Defense Force: Insect Armageddon** 5
VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE
Ugly, repetitive and about 10 years out of date.

- El Shaddai: Ascension of the Metatron** 8
VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE
Breath-takingly beautiful and inventive.
- RECOMMENDED Final Fight: Double Impact** 8
PROPER GAMES
Forget about *Magic Sword*; play *Final Fight*.
- NEW Fist of the North Star: Ken's Rage 2** 5
KOEI
It's *Dynasty Warriors* but with fists. Duller than an accountant shade of brown.
- RECOMMENDED Galaga Legions DX** 8
NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS
Bullet hell made pretty.
- RECOMMENDED Ghostbusters: The Video Game** 9
TERMINAL REALITY/THREEWAVE SOFTWARE
Robust, charming and impeccably presented.



- God of War: Ascension** 8
DEVELOPER: SANTA MONICA STUDIOS
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
PLAYERS: 1 - 8
"As one of the country's first R18+ rated videogames, *Ascension* is a joyfully violent experience, often brutally so. A consistent, well-polished bundle of fun."
- RECOMMENDED Hitman: Absolution** 9
IO INTERACTIVE
Cleverly balances stealth and action for both newbies and long time fans.
- RECOMMENDED House of the Dead: Overkill - Extended Cut** 8
HEADSTRONG GAMES
Has its tongue so far in its cheek it's almost poking out the other side. Requires Move.

- Hunted: The Demon's Forge** 7
INXILE
A textbook example of 'alright'. Co-op rules.
- ESSENTIAL Jetpack Joyride** 10
HALFBRICK/BEATSHAPES
Insanely addictive. An instant purchase.
- ESSENTIAL Just Cause 2** 9
AVALANCHE STUDIOS
Parachutes. Grappling hooks. Stripper zeppelins. An insane action game.
- Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days** 7
IO INTERACTIVE
Clever visuals, dull game.

- Lollipop Chainsaw** 6
GRASSHOPPER MANUFACTURE
Witless, puerile, and irredeemably dull. You'd be right to expect more from Suda51.
- NEW Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance** 7
PLATINUM GAMES
The camera suppers this ballistic action game. Missable.
- Midway Arcade Origins** 3
MIDWAY
Over 30 different ways to waste your time. You're better off burning \$40.
- RECOMMENDED Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2** 8
TEAM NINJA
A sexy and rock-hard title, but the gore's been cut.
- Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge** 6
TEAM NINJA
Not worthy upgrading to. Just let it be.

- One Piece: Pirate Warriors** 6
TECMO KOEI
Dynasty Warriors in a new skin. Cool story, but you can play this with your buttocks.
- RECOMMENDED Pac-Man Championship Edition DX** 9
NAMCO BANDAI
A revolutionary sequel that will put blisters on your eyeballs and thumbs. Hypnotic.
- RECOMMENDED PixelJunk** 8
SideScroller
Q-GAMES
Old-school fun meets new age design.

- RECOMMENDED Prototype 2** 8
RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT
Dumb plot, fantastic gory action. Loads of fun.
- Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One** 7
INSOMNIAC GAMES
Chaotic and confusing with four players, and a bit dull in single player.
- Red Faction: Armageddon** 7
VOLITION, INC.
Brown, corridor-based action that will leave you snoring. Get *Guerrilla* instead.

- RECOMMENDED Red Faction: Guerrilla** 9
VOLITION, INC.
The best destruction effects ever, hands down, with loads to see and do.
- RECOMMENDED Renegade Ops** 8
AVALANCHE STUDIOS
A sleek twin-stick shooter with split screen!
- Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles** 7
CAPCOM
On-rails lightgun rehash of *Resi 2* with bits of lore thrown in. The too-shaky camera sucks.
- RECOMMENDED Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles** 8
CAPCOM
Better camera and broader subject matter that includes *Resi 0*. Uses Move.

- Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City** 7
SLANT SIX GAMES
Buggy in single player, but gets better online with mates. Unresponsive and ugly at times.



- Retro City Rampage** 8
DEVELOPER: VBLANK ENTERTAINMENT
DISTRIBUTOR: VBLANK ENTERTAINMENT
PLAYERS: 1
"A fiendish send-up of *GTA* with more references than you can poke a DeLorean at. Challenging, tight, addictive - and it works on both PS3 and PS Vita."

- RECOMMENDED Saints Row 3** 9
VOLITION, INC.
Big, brash and unapologetically dumb fun.
- Scott Pilgrim vs. the World** 7
UBISOFT
Distinctly old-school. Needs co-op partners.
- Shank 2** 7
KLEI ENTERTAINMENT
Better combat but disappointing graphics compared to the original. Still cool, though.
- RECOMMENDED Sine Mora** 8
DIGITAL REALITY
Really beautiful and very tough side-scrolling shoot-'em-up. Teases relentlessly.

- Skylanders Giants** 7
TOYS FOR BOB
As great as the first game and backwards compatible, but needed to evolve more.
- RECOMMENDED Sleeping Dogs** 8
UNITED FRONT GAMES
Best-in-class combat and great presentation. You'll absolutely curse the vehicles, though.

- RECOMMENDED Sniper Elite V2** 8
REBELLION
A few rough edges here and there but the sniping is magnificent. Also, you can kill Hitler.
- RECOMMENDED SOCOM: Special Forces** 8
ZIPPER INTERACTIVE
Great online with Move and a Sharp Shooter.
- Spec Ops: The Line** 7
YAGER
Tries to depict the horrors of war but fails. Gets better just before the credits roll.

- RECOMMENDED Starhawk** 8
SANTA MONICA STUDIO
Addictive multi, more than competent splitscreen. Buy it.
- RECOMMENDED Transformers: Fall of Cybertron** 8
HIGH MOON STUDIOS
This is a must-get for fans. Two steps forward and one step back from *War for Cybertron*.

- RECOMMENDED Vanquish** 8
PLATINUM GAMES
Whip quick third-person thrills. Play it now.
- RECOMMENDED Velocity** 9
FUTURLAB
A hypnotic racing-puzzler-shoot-'em-up and it's less than \$10. Challenging and stylish.
- Wonderbook: Book of Spells** 7
SONY
One part readalong, one part Move-wagglefest with a Hogwarts flavour.

Metacritic: radical hatred of the games you like

Website: metacritic.com Game: *Bioshock Infinite* Reviewer: Xextreem Score: 0

How do we stop this. Those hypes about games its like a rage like flippos back in 1994. You people need to stop it. Its just a game walking to it no ffa mode nothing just a damn walk here to there mode. That's all nothing more nothing less. Some 80/80 find objects are nice but he come on that's only to keep you busy for a while. So at the end its about the game play ok the game have great almost perfect graphics but that's not why its a game. The game play that's made the game I gave it a 7/10 but because of the hype I reduce the score here on this game because hype is not fair its like fanboy over fanbuy.



Zone of the Enders HD Collection 7
KONAMI
Kojima's mechs-and-melodrama duo are all dolled up but still feels thin.

ACTION-ADVENTURE

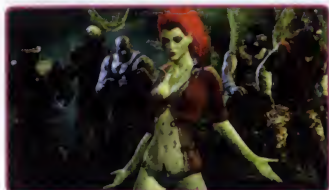
3D Dot Game Heroes 7
FROM SOFTWARE
If you pine for the past you'll feel like this was made just for you.

Alice: Madness Returns 7
SPICY HORSE
Marries great ideas with average platforming.

The Amazing Spider-Man 7
BEENOX
Rips off *Arkham City* but lacks the depth.

RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed Revelations 8
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Feels more like a (really big) expansion than a true sequel. *Brotherhood* is better.

RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed III 9
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Looks better and is more ambitious than its predecessors with only a few niggles.



Batman: Arkham City 10
DEVELOPER: ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: WARNER BROS. PLAYERS: 1
"Everyone else needs to take note: this is how a superhero game should make you feel. It's endlessly creative, perfectly moody and technically flawless. The perfect sequel to *Arkham Asylum*."

Blades of Time 4
GAININ ENTERTAINMENT
Simplistic combat, stupid AI, woeful levels.

RECOMMENDED Brütal Legend 9
DOUBLE FINE PRODUCTIONS
Must play, though the RTS bits are a bit crap.

RECOMMENDED Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 9
MERCURY STEAM
A truly solid romp with tasty combat.

Datura 6
SANTA MONICA STUDIOS
A proof-of-concept Move title that's little more than cobbled-together puzzles. Clunky.

Dead Island Riptide 6
TECHLAND
Minor extras are pushing that full retail tag.

RECOMMENDED Dead Space 3 8
VISCERAL GAMES
Evolved and slick, though it's not scary. Yes, co-op works – just crank up the difficulty.

Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut 5
ACCESS GAMES
So bad it's good, but many won't agree.

RECOMMENDED Enslaved 8
NINJA THEORY
A fun platforming romp based on the same classic story as TV's *Monkey*.

ESSENTIAL God of War III 10
SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO
A graphical showcase, and admirable in scale. Old-fashioned arse-kicking.

RECOMMENDED God of War Collection Volume II 8
READY AT DAWN
Like the first *Collection*, these games have been meticulously updated. Superb.

ESSENTIAL Grand Theft Auto IV 10
ROCKSTAR NORTH
The scope and scale of *GTA IV* is remarkable.

ESSENTIAL Grand Theft Auto: Episodes from Liberty City 9
ROCKSTAR NORTH
Two new single-player campaigns, expanded multiplayer and an explosive shotgun? Yes.

Hitman: HD Trilogy 7
IO INTERACTIVE
A tight-fisted update. *Blood Money* is the highlight out of the three games on the disc.

Hydrophobia: Prophecy 5
DARK ENERGY DIGITAL
Shoddy game, great water tech.

RECOMMENDED I Am Alive 9
UBISOFT
The game that was retail but now PSN only is dark, constantly tense and very satisfying.

RECOMMENDED inFAMOUS 2 9
SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS
Bigger and better, and the level editor is solid.

RECOMMENDED LEGO Batman 2: DC Super Heroes 8
TRAVELLER'S TALES
While its predecessor felt old this feels fresh.

RECOMMENDED LEGO Batman 2: DC Super Heroes 8
TRAVELLER'S TALES
While its predecessor felt old this feels fresh.

RECOMMENDED LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures 9
TRAVELLER'S TALES
A joyous adaptation; one of the best.

RECOMMENDED LEGO Lord of the Rings 8
TRAVELLER'S TALES
A solid and rather large LEGO outing. Expertly weaves in bits from the films.

Majin and the Forsaken Kingdom 7
GAME REPUBLIC
A feel-good romp that's a little old-fashioned.

Mafia II 8
2K CZECH
Great when it's on fire but the world feels empty. Has been well and truly bested.

RECOMMENDED Max Payne 3 8
ROCKSTAR
A riveting rollercoaster where each firefight is a ballet of bullets. Superbly atmospheric.

ESSENTIAL Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots 10
KONAMI
Yes, it's as much a movie as it is a game but the production values are insane.

RECOMMENDED Metal Gear Solid HD Collection 9
KONAMI
MGS2 has aged, *Snake Eater* is still all class and *Peace Walker* rocks.

Ninja Gaiden 3 7
TEAM NINJA
Mind you don't impale yourself on the difficulty spike. Fans will lap it up.

RECOMMENDED Okami HD 8
CAPCOM
Got 40 hours spare? Get this. It's absolutely beautiful and has aged spectacularly well.

RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time 9
INSOMNIAC GAMES
Reinvigorates the genre without reinventing the wheel.

RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction 8
INSOMNIAC GAMES
A big, wild, good ol' fashioned adventure.

ESSENTIAL Red Dead Redemption 10
ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
A sweeping epic. Grab the Game of the Year edition for maximum value.

RECOMMENDED Resident Evil 4 8
CAPCOM
A straight port and not as pretty as it was, but it's still great.

RECOMMENDED Resident Evil 5 9
CAPCOM
A grand, bloody adventure but the inventory system remains bad.

RECOMMENDED Resident Evil 6 8
CAPCOM
Starts out slow and then ramps up. Worth buying for Mercenaries mode.

RECOMMENDED The Saboteur 8
PANDEMIC STUDIOS
Charming and packed with action. Great, unique visual style.

Shadows of the Damned 7
GRASSHOPPER MANUFACTURE
Full of dick jokes and so-so gameplay from two geniuses of design. A real shame.

Silent Hill: Downpour 7
VATRA GAMES
True to the pants-browning original, but technical problems and stupid AI tarnish it.

Silent Hill HD Collection 7
KONAMI
True evil never dies; it gets a decent facelift. It's a pity some scenes got cut, though.

Sorcery 7
THE WORKSHOP
A genuinely fun Move title geared towards kids. Fun, lively tone with wink-wink writing.

RECOMMENDED Terraria 8
RE-LOGIC
The most successful of the *Minecraft* clones and one of the most memorable indie games.

NEW RECOMMENDED Tomb Raider 9
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
Lara is back and in a big way. Evolved, action-packed and an explorer's wet dream.

ESSENTIAL Uncharted 2: Among Thieves 10
NAUGHTY DOG
This is the reason Hollywood is so worried about videogames.



Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception 10
DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG
PUBLISHER: SONY PLAYERS: 1-12
"Impeccable in every regard. The action ramps up and up, taking you on foot-chases to teeth-gritting firefights and beyond to stunning set pieces. Totally complements and enhances the other games in the series."

RECOMMENDED Yakuza 4 8
CSI TEAM
One for the fans, but it's very refreshing.

ADVENTURE

The Cave 7
DOUBLE FINE PRODUCTIONS
Wants you to play through multiple times but it turns into a chore. Needs more refining.

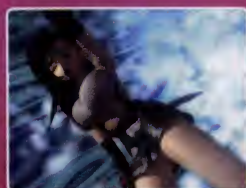
RECOMMENDED Heavy Rain 8
QUANTIC DREAM
Not quite a revolution but very clever and very well-crafted.

Journey 9
THATGAMECOMPANY
Stunningly realised. A game unlike any other and perhaps the friendliest multiplayer.

Knytt Underground 7
GREENHILL
A basic 'Metroidvania' that fails to truly ignite, but is entertaining nonetheless.



THE BEST PSone CLASSICS ON PlayStation®Store



FINAL FANTASY VII
DEVELOPER: SQUARE
PLAYERS: 1
The RPG upon which all other RPGs are generally judged, *Final Fantasy VII* is a modern classic and a worthy part of every credible videogame library.



DRIVER
DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS
INTERACTIVE PLAYERS: 1
The original *Driver* hit PlayStation like a blast of fresh air. Hectic car chases through cities may be old-hat now but when *Driver* debuted it was like nothing we'd seen.



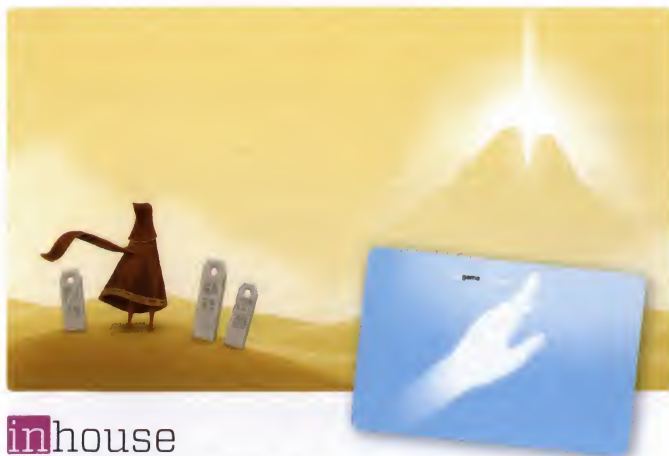
CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED
DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG
PLAYERS: 1
The best platformer on any PlayStation. As far as old-school run and jump action in purpose-built levels goes, *this* is the zenith.



SYPHON FILTER
DEVELOPER: EGETIC
PLAYERS: 1
If you still think *Syphon Filter* was a MGS rip-off you're misled. Play it again and tell us this awesome series doesn't deserve a PS3 comeback.



MEDIEVIL
DEVELOPER: SCE STUDIO
CAMBRIDGE PLAYERS: 1
Speaking of games that deserve a PS3 comeback, where's Sir Dan? Fantasy hack 'n slash meets the supernatural, *Medieval* still does it better than most since.



inhouse

FEATURED STUDIO OF THE MONTH

thatgamecompany

LOCATION: LOS ANGELES, USA FOUNDED: 2006

BEST KNOWN FOR: FLOW, FLOWER, JOURNEY

In the fall of 2005, University of Southern California students Kellee Santiago and Jenova Chen had the craziest dream: create a videogame company. For the imaginative twosome it was a logical step, their game, *Cloud*, proving they could "express something different than videogames had in the past" while still garnering a positive critical reception.

By spring 2006 thatgamecompany was born, but things were just getting started. You see, Chen's Flash game, *Flow*, had caught the eye of Sony Computer Entertainment and soon enough thatgamecompany had signed a deal with the videogame monolith to create three games for the upcoming PlayStation Network distribution system.

Flow was released on the PlayStation Store in 2007, this time with enhanced visuals and sound, added multiplayer modes and compatibility with the PlayStation 3's motion sensitive controller, SIXAXIS. The game quickly turned heads and cemented Chen and Santiago's vision to "create timeless interactive entertainment that makes positive change to the human psyche worldwide". Now that's a tagline.

By 2009, the company's second game, *Flower* hit the PSN and was also met with astounding reviews, but it was to be game number three that was the game-changer. Released in March last

year, *Journey* told the tale of a robed figure in a vast desert, travelling towards a mountain in the distance. It was sparse, hauntingly beautiful and stole the hearts of many, nabbing Game of the Year awards from across the globe.

For Chen, it was all just another day at the office, stating in an interview prior to *Journey*'s release:

"When you look at the emotional spectrum of videogames, I think it has a lot of equivalents to the summer blockbuster action adventure film. It has a lot of horror films. It has a lot of sports. But it doesn't necessarily have a lot of drama; the emotional width and depth that videogames manage to accomplish is still very limited. That's why we started thatgamecompany, we wanted to spearhead [that in] the videogame industry and explore the emotional breadth; the width and the depth."

While Santiago left thatcompany shortly after *Journey*'s release, the studio has since secured independent funding, leaving us to patiently wait for what's next. If ex-employee Asher Vollmer is to be believed then the finished project will "change the industry in a really positive way." Don't hold your breath for it though, word on the street is it's years off from release. Now we wait...

ESSENTIAL L.A. Noire

TEAM BOND

Slow-paced, incredibly detailed and well-executed. Unlike anything else available.

Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust

TEAM17 SOFTWARE

An amazing new low for this generation. Not even 'so bad it's good', it's just awful.

RECOMMENDED Stacking

DOUBLE FINE

A truly unique concept and a real brain tickler.

The Testament of Sherlock Holmes

FROGWARES

Slow-paced and challenging, one for those who've always dreamt of being Holmes.

RECOMMENDED The Walking Dead - Episode 5

TELLTALE GAMES

Emotional and gripping storytelling – the whole series is astounding.

FIGHTING

Anarchy Reigns

PLATINUM GAMES

Lots of potential, but it needs online players.

Dead or Alive 5

TEAM NINJA

A slick, beautiful mash of fighting polish and icky sleaze, but evolves into a frantic mess.

RECOMMENDED Injustice: Gods Among Us

NETHERREALM STUDIOS

For hardcore nerds, it's a wet dream made real; for everyone else it's a spectacle.

Marvel vs Capcom: Origins

CAPCOM/IRON GALAXY STUDIOS

Two titles in one boring and outdated package. Yawn.

RECOMMENDED Mortal Kombat

NETHERREALM

A sterling return to form. Now available in Oz in Complete form!

NEW Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm 3

CYBERCONNECT2

Bigger, but not really better. Still looks like you're playing an anime, which is lovely.

NEW **RECOMMENDED** Persona 4 Arena

ARC SYSTEM WORKS

A very clever mix of RPG and fighting that's also beautiful to look at.

PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale

SUPERBOT ENTERTAINMENT

A reliable brawler but the lineup's lacking. Where's Snake, or Cloud?

RECOMMENDED Skullgirls

REVENGE LABS

Wacky and weird but you'll love it.

RECOMMENDED SoulCalibur V

NAMCO BANDAI

Great weapons-based combat for online play, but single player is a bit thin. IV still rocks.

10 **RECOMMENDED** Street Fighter III - Third Strike Online Edition
IRON GALAXY
Very different from IV and utterly brilliant.

1 **RECOMMENDED** Street Fighter X Tekken
CAPCOM
Ridiculously entertaining and well-made, but the DLC strategy blows.

8 Super Street Fighter IV Arcade Edition
CAPCOM
For first time purchasers only. You'll probably find this or *SSFIV* on the cheap somewhere.

RECOMMENDED Tekken Tag Tournament 2
NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS
Innovative and challenging. Tonnes of characters, including a few newbies.

RECOMMENDED Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3
CAPCOM
Blinding action with a roster you deserve.

RECOMMENDED Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown
SEGA
Fast and clean, but the tasty extras are DLC.

WWE '13
YUKE'S FUTURE MEDIA CREATORS
Comprehensively spoiled by sloppy controls. It hasn't improved much on last year, either.

FLIGHT

Ace Combat: Assault Horizon
PROJECT ACES
Reality-bending fare that lacks depth.

Apache: Air Assault
GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT
Hardcore chopper sim with impressive detail but lacks variety. Good online, though.

RECOMMENDED Birds of Steel
GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT
Hardcore stuff. The *IL2* heritage shines through, but it's not as pretty as it once was.

Damage Inc. Pacific Squadron WWII
MAD CATZ
A comprehensive failure. Unimaginative, glitchy, and it looks terrible.

ESSENTIAL IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey
GAIJIN ENTERTAINMENT
Packed with little details across the board.

Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters
TRICKSTAR GAMES
Fifth-rate design and presentation.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2
UBISOFT ROMANIA
Way better mission design over the first title and good variety too.

Top Gun: Hard Lock
HEADSTRONG GAMES
Limp and aimless. A trap laced with nostalgia that goes into a flat spin quickly.

THE BEST PSP GAMES

**GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES**

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR LEEDS

PLAYERS: 1-6

This is about as remarkable as gaming gets on a handheld console. A fully-fledged 3D GTA, just like the PS2 versions, on PSP – and it feels absolutely brilliant. Also? Phil Collins is in it. Yes, we're totally serious.

**MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM UNITE**

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PLAYERS: 1-4

Monster Hunter is a true system seller in its native Japan and it deserves that sort of awareness here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to, rewarding you in spades if you're able to put the effort in. Even better with mates.

**WIPEOUT PULSE**

DEVELOPER: SCE LIVERPOOL

PLAYERS: 1-8

Beautiful and weighted just right, it's a futurist's wet dream. There's a reason *Wipeout* just works – and this is proof. Depending on which day of the week you ask us this just pips the likes of *Burnout Legends* and *Gran Turismo* for best racing game on PSP.

**METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER**

DEVELOPER: KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

PLAYERS: 1-6

A proper, well-produced and thought-out *Metal Gear*; this is a must-have. The story's great and the action is totally addictive. We can't stress it enough: buy this game, and a PSP if you must. It's a title that no gamer should miss.

**GOD OF WAR: GHOST OF SPARTA**

DEVELOPER: READY AT DAWN

PLAYERS: 1

Stupidly better than the already excellent *Chains of Olympus*, this still has fantastic graphics and tighter-than-Hades gameplay. If you're a fan of the series, this is a crucial part of the saga you really need to play.

MUSIC

AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack 7
HARMONIX
Bare-bones stuff, but fully exportable.

RECOMMENDED The Beatles: Rock Band 9
HARMONIX
Outstanding. This is a tribute like no other.

RECOMMENDED DJ Hero 2 9
FREESTYLEGAMES
Some great improvements and excellent mixes.

RECOMMENDED Green Day: Rock Band 8
HARMONIX
Very good. Up there with *The Beatles: Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero: Metallica*.

Guitar Hero 5 7
NEVERSOFT
The last in the series with a dud tracklist.

RECOMMENDED Guitar Hero: Metallica 8
NEVERSOFT
The best in the series since *Guitar Hero III*.

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock 7
NEVERSOFT
Functional, but it's missed the mark.

RECOMMENDED Just Dance 3 8
UBISOFT
You need PlayStation Move and a lot of enthusiasm to get the most out of this.

RECOMMENDED Just Dance 4 8
UBISOFT
As silly and fun as the last instalment.

LEGO Rock Band 8
HARMONIX / TRAVELLER'S TALES
Cute. Fewer tracks than we'd like though.

PixelJunk 4am 5
Q GAMES
Move controls are poorly implemented. A pity.

RECOMMENDED Retro/Grade 8
24 CARET GAMES
A shooter-cum-rhythm game that's loaded with lasers.

RECOMMENDED Rock Band 3 9
HARMONIX
Improvements to the interface abound, but it's only as good as your existing DLC library.

Rock Band Blitz 7
HARMONIX
Once again an extensive library of *Rock Band* DLC will ensure you enjoy this.

RECOMMENDED Rocksmith 8
UBISOFT
More an educational tool than game, but it works really, really well.

SingStar 8
SCE LONDON STUDIO
Will last as long as the PS3 with so much DLC.

PARTY

Ape Escape 4
JAPAN STUDIO
A serious misstep. An on-rails shooter where the monkeys run towards you? Pass.

EyePet 7
SCE LONDON STUDIO
Harmless fun but pointless for adults.

Kung Fu Rider 3
JAPAN STUDIO
Waggle-tastic. A terrible Move game.

PlayStation Move Heroes 7
NIHLISTIC SOFTWARE
One for undemanding kids. Fun but bland.

Sports Champions 2 6
ZINDAGI GAMES
The original was a must-have. This isn't.

Start the Party! Save the World! 5
SUPERMASSIVE GAMES
A Move game for the very young.

Yoostar 2 7
BLITZ GAME STUDIOS
Imperfect yet hilarious movie karaoke title.

PUZZLE/PLATFORMER

Babel Rising 6
MANDO PRODUCTIONS
This tower-defence god-game has a spirited concept but winds up being soulless.

ESSENTIAL Braid 10
HOTHEAD GAMES
Probably the best-ever example of how to implement time-bending physics.

RECOMMENDED Catherine 8
ATLUS
Niche and weird in places, but compelling.

RECOMMENDED Chime 8
ZØE MODE
A music-based puzzler where you need to slot in blocks to rockin' (and chilled) beats.

RECOMMENDED de Blob 2 9
BLUE TONGUE ENTERTAINMENT
Surprisingly fun, fresh and colourful. Stupidly cheap on the PS Store.

Epic Mickey 2: The Power of Two 6
JUNCTION POINT STUDIOS
Way better with Move and with two players, but it's a bit tricky for young 'uns.

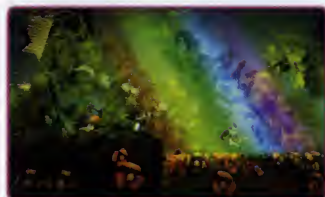
RECOMMENDED Flight Control 9
FIREMINT
One of the best Move games ever.

Giana Sisters: Twisted Dreams 6
BLACK FOREST DREAMS
A bold platformer that will crush your soul.

RECOMMENDED Jak & Daxter Trilogy 9
SONY
PS2 mascots prove they are evergreen. A truly fine HD makeover.

RECOMMENDED Joe Danger 2 8
HELLO GAMES
A platformer-puzzler with bundles of charm.

RECOMMENDED Katamari Forever 8
NAMCO BANDAI
Joyful, though the series is showing its age.



LittleBigPlanet 2 9
DEVELOPER: MEDIA MOLECULE PUBLISHER: SONY PLAYERS: 1-4
"A truly charming platformer. Incredibly innovative and never-ending; you could sink a lifetime into creating anything you want for this and never be done."

NIGHTS into Dreams HD 6
SEGA (SHANGHAI) SOFTWARE
A game from yesterday riddled with cracks.

RECOMMENDED Outland 9
HOUSEMARQUE
Liberally copies bits from old-school *Castlevania* but it does it well. Very clever.

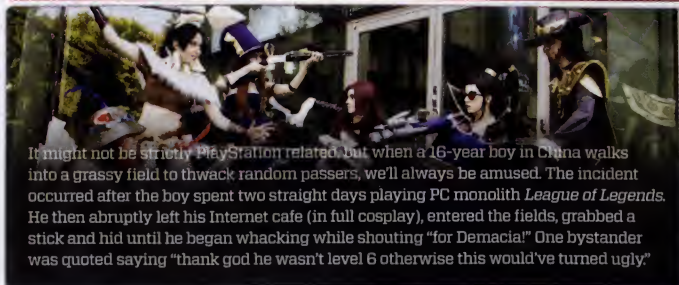
Papo & Yo 7
MINORITY
Deep, affecting subject, but predictable and simple. Not cheap, either.

Pid 5
MIGHT AND DELIGHT
Frustrating and not much fun at all. You will swear... a lot.

RECOMMENDED Quantum Conundrum 8
AIRTIGHT GAMES
If you're expecting more *Portal*, stop. Very cool ideas marred by frustrating platforming.

RECOMMENDED The Ratchet & Clank Trilogy 9
INSOMNIAC/IDOLMINDS
Excellent value for money and still refined.

For the LoLs



It might not be strictly PlayStation related, but when a 16-year boy in China walks into a grassy field to thwack random passers, we'll always be amused. The incident occurred after the boy spent two straight days playing PC monolith *League of Legends*. He then abruptly left his Internet cafe (in full cosplay), entered the fields, grabbed a stick and hid until he began whacking while shouting "for Demacia!" One bystander was quoted saying "thank god he wasn't level 6 otherwise this would've turned ugly!"

RECOMMENDED Rayman Origins 8
UBISOFT MONTPELLIER
Utterly gorgeous. Truly great with friends.

RECOMMENDED The Sly Collection 9
SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS
A surprisingly fun and fresh bunch of gems.

RECOMMENDED Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode II 8
SEGA
Better than *Episode I* with tweaked physics. Also includes Tails, and he's *actually useful*.

Sonic Generations 7
SONIC TEAM
Starts out great and falters towards the end.

RECOMMENDED Sound Shapes 8
QUEASY GAMES
A music-based romp that embraces user generated content. On Vita, too. Very good.

The Unfinished Swan 7
GIANT SPARROW
Short, but beautiful and endearing. You'll need a Move controller, though.

RECOMMENDED Trine 2 8
FROZENBYTE
Puzzles and platforming wrapped up with gorgeous three-player arcade action.

RECOMMENDED When Vikings Attack 8
CLEVER BEANS
Fiendishly difficult but you'll love it for that.

RECOMMENDED Wizorb 7
TRIBUTE GAMES
A modern take on *Arkanoid* with magic and special powers. Dirt cheap. Great on Vita!

RACING/DRIVING

Blur 7
BIZARRE CREATIONS
A race to power-ups rather than a racer with power-ups.

RECOMMENDED Burnout Paradise 9
CRITERION GAMES
Stunning and sharp but we miss the dedicated Crash Mode.

RECOMMENDED Daytona USA 8
SEGA
Addictive as ever and beyond arcade-perfect.

RECOMMENDED DiRT 3 8
CODEMASTERS
A welcome return to form. Great car roster, awesome handling, incredible sound.

DiRT Showdown 7
CODEMASTERS RACING
Flamboyance without substance and dumbed-down handling. Gymkhana rules.

RECOMMENDED Driver: San Francisco 9
REFLECTIONS
The series returns to its roots and delivers superb action-adventure racing. A must get.

RECOMMENDED Dyad 8
J1
A seizure-inducing, music-based blaster.

RECOMMENDED F1 2012 9
CODEMASTERS
Has more variety and toe-in-the-water moments. Weird flag rules, though.

F1 Race Stars 6
CODEMASTERS RACING
Tedious kart racer. No drifting, either.



Gran Turismo Sport 9
DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL PUBLISHER: SONY PLAYERS: 1-16
"GT5 feels familiar, and is still an RPG masquerading as a racing game. It looks stunning with class-leading lighting effects and exceptionally modelled premium cars, and with a G27 wheel it feels incredible. We just wish that there were some more recent cars."

RECOMMENDED LittleBigPlanet Karting 8
UNITED FRONT GAMES
Easier than *ModNation* but more loaded with opportunity to create. Lots of fun.

RECOMMENDED ModNation Racers 9
UNITED FRONT GAMES
Creating is even more fun than racing.

MotoGP 10/11 6
MONUMENTAL GAMES
Dull presentation and crap controls wreck it.

MotorStorm Apocalypse 8
EVOLUTION STUDIOS
The new locale lacks a little charm but the racing is as fast and frantic as ever.

MX vs. ATV Alive 5
RAINBOW STUDIOS
A step backwards for a series that peaked on PS2 and has gotten lamer since.

MUD - FIM Motocross World Championship 6
BLACK BEAN GAMES
No-frills motocross racing.

RECOMMENDED Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 9
CRITERION GAMES
Smooth and truly beautiful arcade racing.

RECOMMENDED Need For Speed Most Wanted 8
CRITERION
A fantastic open-world racer that needs to be online. Great multiplayer too.

RECOMMENDED Race Driver: GRID 9
CODEMASTERS
A born-to-rage racing rebel. A bit old, but the only other racer to have Mount Panorama.

Ridge Racer Unbounded 6
BUGBEAR ENTERTAINMENT
Woeful drifting, infuriating track design. Such a pity.

SBK Generations 7
MILESTONE
Fairly similar to *2011* and *X*. Technical and lovely but it's comparatively ugly.

RECOMMENDED SHIFT 2: Unleashed 9
SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS
Frantic racing with plenty of depth.

Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed 7
SUMO DIGITAL
Tracks are great, the rest is okay. Pick Sonic.

RECOMMENDED Split/Second 8
BLACK ROCK STUDIO
Challenges *Burnout* but needed to be sharper.

WRC 3 6
MILESTONE
Does the bare minimum. Stick with 2 or *DiRT*.

Wrecked: Revenge Revisited 7
SUPERSONIC SOFTWARE
Absolute must-have for local-multi.

RPG/ACTION RPG

Alpha Protocol 5
OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
Great concept, poor execution.

NEW RECOMMENDED Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist of Dusk 8
GUST
Girly but trim. The best in the series.

RECOMMENDED Disgaea 4: A Promise Unforgotten 8
NIPPON ICHI SOFTWARE
Very familiar for fans but still exciting.

RECOMMENDED Dark Souls 8
FROM SOFTWARE
Brutally, stupidly, gloriously hard.

RECOMMENDED Darksiders II 9
VIGIL GAMES
Slicker, tougher and deeper than the first.

RECOMMENDED Dragon Age II 8
BIOWARE
A step forward and two back from Origins.

RECOMMENDED Dragon's Dogma 8
CAPCOM
A challenging and punishing action-RPG.

Dragon's Dogma: Dark Arisen 9
CAPCOM
A kick-arse second chance at one of the decade's best action RPGs.

ESSENTIAL The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim 10
BETHESDA GAME STUDIOS
Book holidays; you will need 300+ hours to discover everything this offers.

RECOMMENDED Fallout: New Vegas 8
OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT
A great ride but you've been on it before.

RECOMMENDED Final Fantasy XIII-2 8
SQUARE ENIX
Better; more freedom but still clunky in places.

Hyperdimension Neptunia Victory 6
COMPILE HEART/IDEA FACTORY
A new JRPG foiled by Japan's love of perving.

RECOMMENDED Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning 8
3B STUDIOS/BIG HUGE GAMES
A patchwork of everything that's great.

RECOMMENDED Labyrinth Legends 6
CREAT STUDIOS
Deceivably cutesy, tougher than a black box.

RECOMMENDED Mass Effect 8
BIOWARE
Worth a purchase for its storytelling.

ESSENTIAL Mass Effect 2 10
BIOWARE
Astonishingly rich combat-driven sci-fi.

ESSENTIAL Mass Effect 3 10
BIOWARE
One-ups its impressive predecessor.

RECOMMENDED Ni No Kuni 9
LEVEL 5
Big, beautiful and addictive. Buy it.

Of Orcs and Men 7
CYANIIDE
Unrefined but a bloody good effort compared to their *A Game of Thrones* cash-in.

RECOMMENDED R.A.W. - Realms of Ancient War 4
WIZARBOX
Rough and flavourless. Waves its fingers at RPG conventions and pays for it.

Risen 2 5
DEEP SILVER
A mess. Send it down to Davy Jones' Locker.

Tales of Graces f 7
NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS
Saccharine, yet enticing. Looks lovely.

Tetris Terror



We all love *Tetris*, right? Well how about *Tetris* minus all of the technology? It makes no sense, but that hasn't stopped Spanish group CODECO from creating Analog *Tetris*. Basically, some dude slides pieces down a sloped board as you try to arrange them in a suitable formation. The point? To provide exercise to our muscles, not just our fingers. Sounds like a real blast. What's next, dodging traffic to re-enact *Frogger*? Actually...

Valkyria Chronicles 8
SEGA WOW
Strategy/RPG heads should not miss this.

Way of the Samurai 4 6
ACQUIRE
Wacky and weird. Japanophiles will dig it.

Yakuza: Dead Souls 8
SEGA
Sluggish and dated, like a zombie wearing flares.

SHOOTER

007 Legends 3
EUROCOM
An incomprehensibly awful Bond game and a really shoddy shooter in general.

Aliens: Colonial Marines 5
GEARBOX SOFTWARE
A travesty that took five years to make.

Aliens vs. Predator 9
REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS
One of the best movie-inspired titles ever.

NEW Army of Two: The Devil's Cartel 6
VISCERAL GAMES
Dumb cooperative fun that will be short-lived. It's R rated, too.

RECOMMENDED Battlefield 3 8
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
Single-player blows, multiplayer's awesome.

RECOMMENDED Battlefield: Bad Company 2 8
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE
A deeply dedicated online community but the single-player mischief of the original is M.I.A.

RECOMMENDED BioShock 8
IRRATIONAL GAMES/2K MARIN
Grown-up gaming at its best.

RECOMMENDED BioShock 2 9
2K MARIN/DIGITAL EXTREMES/2K AUSTRALIA
Combat has been spliced to near-perfection.



BioShock Infinite 10
DEVELOPER: IRRATIONAL GAMES
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K PLAYERS: 1
"This is a genre-defining game, and it deserves to be played by anyone who's ready for a brilliant story, engaging gun-play and a real challenge. Infinite will linger in your memory for a long time after the credits have rolled."

RECOMMENDED Borderlands 2 9
GEARBOX SOFTWARE
Wild and overflowing with clever nods. More addictive than its predecessor, too.

Bulletstorm 7
PEOPLE CAN FLY
Inventive and very bloody, but is best towards the end.

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 9
INFINITY WARD
Still worth playing for Spec-Ops alone.

RECOMMENDED Call of Duty: Black Ops II 9
TREYARCH
Reinvents the multiplayer formula and has the best solo campaign out of all CoDs.

RECOMMENDED Crysis 3 9
CRYTEK
The first was a revelation. The second a technological marvel. This is the pinnacle of the series, and the story's okay too.

RECOMMENDED The Darkness II 8
DIGITAL EXTREMES
Gory, inventive, and fun, but pretty short. You need to play co-op for the full story, too.

RECOMMENDED Deus Ex: Human Revolution 8
EIDOS MONTREAL
A flawed masterpiece that doesn't offer quite as much choice as you'd like.

RECOMMENDED Dishonored 8
ARKANE STUDIOS
Anti-climatic, otherwise a bloody good romp.

DOOM 3 BFG Edition 6
ID
It hasn't aged well. A relic with cobwebs.

RECOMMENDED Far Cry 3 9
UBISOFT MONTREAL
Absolutely the best in the series and a new benchmark for open world shooters.

RECOMMENDED Far Cry 3 Blood Dragon 9
UBISOFT MONTREAL
All of the '80s, all of the time. It's totally rad.

F.E.A.R. 3 6
DAY 1 STUDIOS
Capable but unspectacular. Also, not scary.

RECOMMENDED Ghost Recon: Future Soldier 8
UBISOFT PARIS
Beautiful tech and pacing, brilliant co-op.

Killzone HD 5
GUERRILLA GAMES
Killzone before it was good. Easily missed.

RECOMMENDED Killzone 3 9
GUERRILLA GAMES
Epic firefights and an engrossing storyline.

Medal of Honor: Warfighter 5
DANGER CLOSE
Old hat. Buggy solo, and lacklustre multi.

NEW RECOMMENDED Metro: Last Light 8
4A GAMES
Dark, atmospheric and often creepy as hell.

RECOMMENDED Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath 8
JUST ADD WATER
A fun mish-mash of platforming and shooting.

RECOMMENDED The Orange Box 9
EA UK / VALVE
Get it for *Portal*, keep it for *Half-Life 2*. An evergreen package.

RECOMMENDED Portal 2 9
VALVE
One of the most brilliant games, ever. Beautifully paced in solo and co-op.

RAGE 7
ID
Holds promise but the world feels empty.

RECOMMENDED Resistance 3 8
INSOMNIAC GAMES
Derivative action but effortlessly compelling.

Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2 5
CITY INTERACTIVE
An overly linear shooter that fails to fire.

RECOMMENDED Twisted Metal 8
EAT SLEEP PLAY
Fast, refreshing and tactical. Great online.

The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct 4
TERMINAL REALITY
Don't. Just... Don't.

SPORTS

AFL Live 6
BIG ANT
Does a decent job of things – just.



FIFA 13 9
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-22
"Inches closer and closer to the real thing. First Touch Controls are game- and genre-changing, and there's a very healthy and complex online component too."

RECOMMENDED Fight Night Champion 9
EA CANADA
Refined controls, excellent story mode and super-quick gameplay. Near perfect.

RECOMMENDED Madden NFL 13 8
EA TIBURON
Dodgy physics aside, this is the best the series has been.

RECOMMENDED MLB 13 The Show 9
SCE SAN DIEGO STUDIO
The complete package that will leave you feeling like a real-life American.

RECOMMENDED NBA 2K13 9
VISUAL CONCEPTS
One of *NBA*'s finest moments yet.

RECOMMENDED NBA Jam: On Fire Edition 8
EA CANADA
Loads of fun. For \$20 you're mad not to get it.

RECOMMENDED Pro Evolution Soccer 2013 8
KONAMI
Does lots of things differently to *FIFA* and it's doing them bloody well.

Rugby League Live 2 6
BIG ANT STUDIOS
Fixes some of *Live*'s problems but it feels crude. For die-hards only.

RECOMMENDED Skate 3 8
EA BLACK BOX
Better in many ways, though we'd stick with the madness of *Skate 2*.

SSX 7
EA CANADA
Labyrinthine courses mean plenty to do, but you might get lost on the way.

NEW Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14 8
EA TIBURON
A round worthy of the great Tiger Woods. You can play as old people, too.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD 6
ROBOMODO
Skippy. Lacks content and no splitscreen.

RECOMMENDED Top Spin 4 8
2K CZECH
Still the best tennis sim with a DualShock.

RECOMMENDED UFC Undisputed 3 9
YUKE'S MEDIA CREATIONS
If you 'get' the sport you need this.

RECOMMENDED Virtua Tennis 4 8
SUMO DIGITAL
Superb Move controls and supremely pretty.

Next month

On the ground at the 'E3 to be at'

All your PS4 questions answered. What launch titles? When's it out? Is it shaped like a badger?



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